

SHIM SHAMMIN': ESSENTIALS FOR TEACHING JAZZ DANCE IN HIGHER
EDUCATION

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to explore teaching jazz dance in higher education. I investigate three research avenues: the role of music and its effect in the studio, crucial movement and conceptual elements, and historical foundations. Using open and axial coding, I evaluate master instructor interviews and participant journals to uncover essential landmarks along the three avenues of research. I then develop and teach a university level jazz course with a balanced curriculum. The conclusion of the study outlines experiment successes proposing ways to further the humanist line of inquiry in jazz dance in higher education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Jazz dance is an indigenous American art form that is the backbone of the social dancing scene, Hollywood productions, Broadway stage, and concert dance. In the midst of constant transformation, jazz dance has been codified in a variety of formats over time. Defining jazz dance is itself a complex proposition. The research presented here is focused on exploring another complex subset of ideas, namely how one might *teach* jazz dance in higher education. This exploration brings to the surface numerous discussions about historical authenticity, investigating “technique,” and the effect of musical choice and other topics that spin out of the amalgam of culture that is jazz dance.

The nature of oral traditions, as with jazz music and jazz dance, has proven to complicate their teaching in the classroom. Vernacular art forms and oral traditions, like jazz dance, must be taken out of context when put into a classroom setting. There are some consequences when taking living art into the academy. Jazz dance developed from a culture of people rooted in a certain time and place, so bringing it inside an environment of inquiry and research can distort the essence or even disguise it. Cautioning this, led me to search for writings that spoke to an overarching sensibility of what it means to teach jazz dance, and how to do it well, while at the same time acknowledging the potential pitfalls.

The scholarly literature on jazz dance supplies ample information about pioneering choreographers who also often assumed the role of teacher. Over time, as in other dance idioms, these pioneering teachers and the training of their styles have become somewhat codified. As a result, most writing on teaching jazz dance reflects the differences in their techniques, i.e., it is descriptive rather than interpretive. Writings on important teachers

and innovators like Luigi (Eugene Louis Facciuto), Jack Cole, Lynn Simonson, Bob Fosse, Gus Giordano, and Matt Mattox fit under this umbrella. However, their artistic work and techniques are not the main focuses of my research, nor is it the information that I am seeking. Their contributions aid in answering more specific questions about jazz dance pedagogy in a higher education environment. What I seek within my research inquiry is the actual teaching of jazz dance, its ethos, its underlying principles and ways of fostering a jazz dance way of being. I also seek foundational principles of jazz dance teaching.

One popular contribution to the literature on American jazz dance as a vernacular art form, is *Jazz Dance* by Marshall and Jean Stearns published in 1968. Their writing reflects personal observations of jazz dance in the 1950s and 1960s and focuses on the historical roots of jazz dance through a cultural lens. In 2014, Lindsay Guarino and Wendy Oliver picked up where the Stearns duo left off, filling in the fifty-year gap of changes and innovation within jazz dance. Their book entitled, *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*, is addressed in the review of literature. Both books are major contributions to jazz dance literature, and will be referenced often throughout my research. However, both texts minimally emphasize jazz dance teaching practices, particularly in higher education. Fortunately, there are other fruitful resources that have aided in my research in teaching jazz dance, and dance in general, that will also be discussed in Chapter II of this thesis.

Beginning with these two important literary resources, I desired to find structure in my inquiry, as jazz dance is a large and evolving topic encompassing many ideas. In order to find this structure and what I was really after in this study, I had to start by looking to the past, specifically, my own. My history as a jazz dancer, the context in which I trained, and how I taught jazz dance for many years sent me to graduate school in the first place to

explore new and improved ways of teaching this vernacular art form. In order for me to find answers, I knew I had to start analyzing and grappling with my own beginnings as a jazz dance artist.

Personal History

My interest in jazz dance did not present itself during graduate school. In fact, it began earlier, at age eight with the start of my dance competition career. My background and training in jazz dance in the private sector context deserves a brief explanation in order to outline a fairly typical development. It may serve to locate my long-term development of understanding and uncovering jazz dance from an academic point of view. By revealing my personal experiences, I hope to include the reader in a more personal understanding of my research journey.

Early Training and Commercial Jazz

My first memory of jazz dancing began at Dee Dee's Dance Studio in DeLand, Florida. Little did I know, at that time, that jazz dance would become a main focus of my dance expression and teaching. 1994 was also the first year I attended and competed at a Tremaine Dance Convention and Competition and introduced to Joe Tremaine, a New Orleans native and popular commercial jazz dance figure and choreographer.

At that time Tremaine had gathered a strong jazz dance faculty, so at a very early age I was exposed to some of the notable jazz choreographers in the commercial dance world and was their student, even if just for a weekend.ⁱ I was unaware at the time that these particular choreographers contributed to jazz dance outside of the Los Angeles music video and dance competition scene. I simply recognized them as potential judges for the competitions that I frequented and as individuals who determined my fate at convention

scholarship auditions. I remained in the competitive dance circuit until age 15, taking classes around the country. From the training I received in my home studios, as well as the exposure I had at Tremaine Conventions, I developed into a predominantly commercially trained jazz dancer.

I've Got the Music in Me – But How?

I fell in love with jazz dance and how it made me feel as a performer, a technician, and a young woman. Performing and practicing jazz made me feel powerful and connected to music differently than any other idiom I studied, e.g., ballet or lyrical.ⁱⁱ The percussiveness and the phrasing of jazz movement was, and still is, exciting to explore. Reflecting on my training, any type of musical education came informally (as I believe it does for most) by way of taking tap dance classes early, and from my musical father, who is a well-versed guitarist. I recollect my main childhood jazz dance instructor focusing on musical nuance, asking us to “fill up our music with dancing, even if the movement was slow or still.” I now realize that she was actually helping us to understand and practice a key element of jazz dance – phrasing, and the musical choices that can assist in teaching phrasing. The jazz choreography I was presented with was narrowly open to improvise, but occasionally in class we could choose what movements to accent sharply, to stretch out to fill musical or physical space, and, ultimately, to experiment with rhythmic patterns that were challenging, yet pleasurable.

I recognize that jazz dance is commonly performed to popular music; dominated by rock n’ roll and various forms of pop. I do not recall jazz music in my jazz classes. With the exception of Tremaine’s swing style jazz class and a few Fosse competition jazz pieces, I danced to the pop radio hits of the time, as most private studio dancers still do. I was

aware that jazz music existed; however, in the engaged and ignorant bliss of youth, I never questioned the fact that we weren't dancing jazz to jazz music in studio classes. These thoughts from the past, combined with my current findings, led me to identify a major avenue of research for this thesis: *the role of music in a jazz dance class*. Specifically, I wanted to investigate musical choices instructors make to emphasize or teach the relationship between a jazz dancer and music, and vice versa; thereby exposing the vital role of improvisation. Chapter II will highlight specific scholars' writings I uncovered that feature their experiences in implementing music in a jazz dance class.

My curiosities of music and teaching jazz dance further ignited during time as a faculty member of Spotlight Dance Center in Orlando, Florida, a recreational dance studio that offers a wide variety of dance classes. It is classified as a non-competitive studio focusing on community events, although advanced students attend one local competition per year to be introduced to the competitive environment. While it is a "recreational" studio, Spotlight Dance Center is an entertainment hub and a frequent audition site for touring Broadway shows and local theme parks like Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World. Within the first year of teaching in 2006, I became one of the main jazz instructors for older high school students as well as the weekly drop in adult jazz class. Over time I became aware there often seemed to be an element missing in my students' jazz dance training. I struggled with observing an absence in the students' connection to music or moving to reflect some kind of musical relationship. It was very difficult for me to explain the driving force of jazz and the relationship the dancer and music share. Without this musical relationship, jazz dance would be empty in physical experience and presentation.

What elements are really important in jazz?

At the beginning of my teaching career, my teaching was, not surprisingly, reflective of my prior training. Like most teachers, I began by teaching as I had been taught, as commercial training brought me success at dance competitions and prepared me for the work in the commercial dance world. My jazz teaching repertoire often consisted of classes like “progressions and turns” when I would facilitate a strictly technical class that focused on movements that were labeled with predominately ballet vocabulary. This was a time for students to work on their “tricks” or “technique”; performance and theatrical skills removed. My drop in, adult class was organized with a set warmup that I led students through each week, a small across the floor phrase, and a final choreographed combination to a pop song of my choice. In short, my focus while teaching jazz was centered on what I believed to be “technique.” I know now that I was focused on teaching movement that was dominated by ballet terminology. Additionally, I choreographed through a single performative lens, always envisioning created movement for the stage.

Considering “technique” in the context of Orlando, Florida where working, commercial dancers are plentiful and the gig market is dense, I felt it important to train students to be able to succeed in their surroundings if they decided to go that route. Success in this context meant solid performance skills mixed with accurate technical abilities, usually in the style of jazz dance. I was simply passing down the information that I knew. However, from the beginning of my training, I knew that jazz dance was more than just the technical abilities; it was coupled with *how* you performed and executed certain movement that made it “jazz.” I always struggled with articulating and incorporating this “*how*” factor when teaching what I knew to be jazz dance movement. Reflecting on this and considering

the many different jazz techniques and manuals led me to question jazz technique, as a whole. So, what movement and conceptual elements are important in teaching jazz dance? In the current state of reinvestigating my teaching philosophy, I am remodeling my teaching structures based on information that *I am only now aware* is important for students to acquire, beyond the movement and vocabulary of competition training. This approach is putting jazz dance under a powerful microscope, and introducing me to new concepts and ideas.

Discovering the Roots

Once I began graduate school, it was a part of the requirements to take dance history courses. This particular program at the University of Oregon requires modern and ballet history. Although we covered significant pioneers and events in the context of modern and ballet, some jazz dance knowledge was also embedded in the modern dance history course. This inclusion opened a door to considering the historical foundations of jazz dance; something I had not considered. How much did I actually know about the historical foundations of a dance idiom that I'd been practicing for so long? I grew up watching Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire, yet I quickly found out that they were certainly not the beginning of jazz dance. So, I started digging.

In the Fall term of my second year of graduate school, I enrolled in a Jazz [music] History course in the School of Music. In this class, we began with early minstrelsy, moved through a timeline that concluded with a segment on jazz and rock-n-roll. The information regarding the history and development of jazz music was incredibly informative to my practice of jazz dance. Not only did I gain a generic understanding of jazz music, but I began to understand why I loved jazz so much, and why I've been attracted to jazz dance

for so long. I love the dance, because I love the music and the lineage of its growth over time, reflecting not just the music and dance worlds, but jazz culture, as an extension of how the people who do it live. As the puzzle pieces came together, I was inspired to bring this knowledge into a jazz dance setting, furthering the idea that jazz music and dance are one entity and reflective of social discourse from a specific place and time.

During this same Fall term, I was assigned to teach Swing dance. With minimal experience, I found a local swing club that held classes during the summer. Social dance had been a part of my life in the context of mambo and other Latin dance forms since my early twenties, so swing dancing made sense in my own movement vocabulary. It also made sense because of my jazz training; something that I realize now, but not necessarily then. Through these classes and reading original Lindy Hopper, Norma Miller's memoir, I caught the jazz dance history (jitter)bug. The discoveries I made with jazz and swing dance were profound. I began to connect movements that I had been doing my whole life with a *context*. Immediately, my jazz dancing identity became clearer; I wanted other jazz dancers to experience this awakening as well. I decided that historical foundations must be an integral avenue of exploration throughout this thesis.

Now, as a graduate student teaching dance to mostly non-majors at the University of Oregon Dance Department, I find that the private sector teaching model doesn't fulfill the educational needs of a student attending a higher education institution. Confronting this was truly the starting point of my thesis research. Since I have the opportunity to teach jazz (levels 1-3), it is a perfect time for me to take a long, critical look at the way I had been teaching jazz for a decade in the context of the private sector and to use the laboratory of the academy to deeply explore what it really means to teach and practice jazz dance. This

awakening brought out many questions. Specifically, how does researching jazz dance teaching in the academy fit into a Eurocentric, academic, modern dance-centered dance program? Standing at a cross roads with my jazz dance past, current literature, and my own relationship with practicing and teaching jazz dance, three main avenues continued to surface throughout the brainstorming sessions that began the formation of this research: the role of music and its effect in the studio; core movement and conceptual elements that foster the development of responsibly teaching a jazz dance; and historical foundations and social integration that provide context for a jazz dancer.

The Humanities and Jazz Dance: A Beneficial Duet

My history with jazz dance in a number of contexts made deciding an area of focus quite complicated. Competition jazz dance in a private studio and musical theatre in a K-12 setting are very different than jazz dance in higher education. Any route is valid, but for this study, I was drawn to the current place of my career, which happened to be a graduate program in the academy. Jazz dance and higher education are an admirable power couple.

Academic environments are intended to foster knowledge and investigation in addition to developing specific vocational skills. These specific environments can also be labeled as subjects that fall under the Humanities umbrella. As jazz has grown, it also has developed flexibility to stylistically expand or contract. Despite its specificity, I believe jazz dance knowledge can contribute mightily to the general knowledge fostered by a college dance program. In contrast to the abundance of literature on the lives that forever changed jazz dance through their stylized teachings and choreography, there are a relatively limited number of resources that discuss teaching jazz dance in higher education. In this research, exploring a jazz dance teaching codex is not the focus. It is too specific to use

one idiomatic lens and I feel therefore doesn't provide a well-rounded understanding of the art form as a whole. It prevents the artist from seeing and experiencing the larger, cultural picture of jazz dance; what I think of as its essence.

The sophisticated inquiry found in higher education coupled with the skill training that jazz dance provides creates a whole, well-rounded dancer. To me, the term "well-rounded" goes beyond the technical and theoretical practice of jazz dance. It extends to the vernacular core of jazz dance, understanding it as an act and expression of humanity that is reflective of society and influences social discourse in return. Jazz dance, (being of the people, by the people and for the people,) undoubtedly and equally belong with other humanities subjects explored in higher education. Studying jazz dance *is* studying language, philosophy, history, and art and how it all relates to contemporary life. My goal is to find ways to incorporate this kind of valuable, "real world" knowledge into a jazz dance class, in addition to the musical, movement, and historical components.

There is a shift afoot in academic curricular models and a concurrent movement towards diversifying dance programs across the country. Dr. Nyama McCarthy-Brown is an advocate for equalizing Western and Non-Western forms of dance within college dance programs. She states, "In a decolonized and truly diverse dance department, all dance technique courses would be given equal value in the curricula" (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 126). Jazz dance is centered in the crux of this current academic dilemma. Based on the information from this research, I hope it becomes clear that jazz dance can deepen a dancer's training in specific ways – both as a mover and as a human being finding a place in this world. Why would we exclude the education that jazz dance can provide for students - especially with its origins rooted in our own soil?

The Eurocentric Paradigm

The subject of the Eurocentric paradigm arose half way through my initial study, and as I continued to search for answers to my questions, the topic repeatedly resurfaced. (More on this topic will appear in the review of literature section in Chapter II.) Racial issues embedded in jazz dance are currently gaining exposure through writings from scholars like McCarthy-Brown and others. (See Ker-Berry and Gottschild) From a practical standpoint, however, it is important to teach jazz dance in higher education as a vessel to civilly confront tough issues that can (and should) surface to broaden our national and global perspectives. Can we tear down the Western/Non-Western wall? I believe that by responsibly teaching jazz dance, we could in fact, contribute to the destruction of the Western/Non-Western wall. Jazz dance was born and raised in the United States, but rooted in Africa and has been inspired by other cultures in addition to being an inspiration for other art forms. Some examples of this would be Latin jazz (music and dance), traditional Indian dance, and hip hop as a continuation of the jazz music and dance lineage. Jazz dance miraculously blurs the lines of separation because it is a fusion art form, in and of itself constantly in flux. Teaching jazz dance considering these components would provide difficulty in prioritizing one form over another, thus, breaking down the Eurocentric paradigm.

I want to be clear that I believe that modern and ballet are fine vessels of creative expression, but jazz dance and other “street” forms like hip-hop are unique in offering students a connection to vernacular expression and its cultural lens. It is common for students in dance programs to begin their dance education in private studios or in a classroom setting, but vernacular dance forms like jazz dance provide students an

opportunity to learn dance as it is done as a social praxis. The academy and “the streets” may often be viewed as opposing communities, but somehow vernacular dance and informed scholarship can bring the two entities together to coexist, even though two entities differ in developmental process. This is the power of diversity in education.

Research Inquiry

While the specificities of jazz dance techniques can be individually compartmentalized, I also believe that the all-encompassing knowledge gained received in a jazz dance class can enhance a dancer’s training within any idiom. Thus begins my infinite list of tough questions regarding teaching jazz dance. Some questions that I hoped to address through this research includes:

- What are the crucial core elements that need to be present in a jazz class with the intention of training a “well-rounded” dancer?
- Does jazz dance history play a role in performance and execution during a class?
- What type(s) of music can be utilized in class to enhance the understanding of jazz dance as a whole?
- In the jazz dance context, how is “technique” interpreted? More importantly, how do you teach students the broader definition of technique within the jazz dance context?
- How do you develop improvisational skills in the jazz dance classroom? Why is this important in the jazz dance classroom?
- How can educators transform students’ jazz dance class expectations into a valuable learning experience that offers new insight while celebrating individual past experiences?

For me, the toughest question remains.... Can we teach it *all* in one ten-week term?

Purpose

The focus on teaching jazz dance in higher education is an effort to explore and expand on the teachings of a vernacular and traditionally, orally transmitted art form that is in a state of constant flux and development. It is important that teaching jazz dance in higher education takes strides to refocus the form's practice from the clouded, commercially driven, after-school context in which it is usually taught. Great educational power resonates from researching cultural elements.

The purpose of this study is to examine different approaches to teaching jazz dance in the academy. I will investigate this topic by navigating three main research avenues:

- 1. The role of music and its effect in the studio;**
- 2. Core movement and conceptual elements that are essential to teaching jazz dance; and**
- 3. Historical foundations coupled with an understanding of cultural impact.**

Through master instructor interviews, review of literature, and consideration of teaching philosophy, I developed a jazz course in the academy with the intention of providing students a deeper experience into jazz dance. This course presents a balanced curriculum containing application of research in the three avenues of this study.

Contributions to the Field

Looking outside of the academy, not only is jazz dance an important development in dance culture, but American culture. Jazz dance is tied to the historical development and artistic fiber of our country. As jazz dance grows and influences (or is influenced by) other styles of dance, it is important to pay homage and understand the classic form of jazz that

is the foundation of expansion. However, while understanding the origins of anything important, a bigger question arises: “Where is it going?” Taking a look back can help us, but as educators, encouraging future endeavors and expansion in jazz dance will keep it flourishing. It is my long-term hope to shine a light on jazz dance through research like this to elevate and sustain jazz dance study in, especially in higher education. But for now, the first stepping-stone is to find out some effective ways to teach jazz dance.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Limitations:

- The thesis research was conducted at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.
- The participant pool consisted of University of Oregon students and all were female, aged 17-22 years of age.
- The participants were UO students that registered for a 10-week Jazz III course, offered Fall term 2016, for one credit. This course is part of the DANC (dance service) offerings which are populated by both non-majors and majors.
- The participant pool consisted of students who have taken Jazz I and Jazz II at the University of Oregon, or had instructor approval.

Delimitations:

- I am investigating teaching jazz dance in the academy and developing a curriculum that is accessible to intermediate/advanced jazz students in a college dance program.
- This study focuses on teaching jazz dance in higher education.
- This study is not an ethnography. Though related issues of jazz in society are part of this research, course development, and focus remain on jazz dance and its teaching.
- It could be argued that the term “pedagogy” is synonymous with “teaching.” However, this research explores and uncovers the practical applications involved in *teaching* a jazz dance class in the academy rather than investigating and expanding the *theory* of teaching (pedagogy) in the context of jazz dance.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The dance section of most research libraries contain many pieces of literature that are dedicated to specific jazz dance artists like Jack Cole, Gus Giordano, and Bob Fosse. Digging deeper into the literature on jazz dance, this same section often overflows with writing on swing dance, social dance, and Black dance in America - all parts of jazz dance. The music section of the library can also contribute to jazz dance knowledge as a legacy of dance studies in musicology. These sources are valuable for many reasons, most importantly for historical foundations. The literature related to specific jazz artists is also noteworthy, as it covers codified styles and praxis of jazz technique, helping dancers, educators, and scholars understand jazz dance as a physical and even a theoretical art form. I find all the literature mentioned above helpful in the classroom, but at the same time, I am confronted with a relative absence of literature on *how* to teach this information to college students in the dance studio. Each resource I have encountered that highlights jazz dance history, individual pioneers, and jazz music could be included in a jazz class curriculum for college dance students, but I have found only a handful of pieces of scholarship that focus a teaching lens for jazz dance, holistically including these other elements. There are manuals for teaching specific jazz dance techniques, but what about teaching a jazz dance class in the context of a more integrated education?

How can we, as educators, introduce elements of Giordano technique in addition to Pepsi Bethel's contributions or the legacy left behind by Whitey's Lindy Hoppers of the Savoy Ballroom? What is "authentic" jazz dance and how far back should we go? Where does musical theatre fit within the curriculum, or Simonson Technique™, which

incorporates a somatic approach to the jazz dance experience, especially in a college setting?

Answers to these kinds of questions are, of course, somewhat subjective. But, with these questions residing at the core of my search, I am interested in developing a personal blue print curriculum for an efficient and holistic approach to teaching jazz dance in higher education – with the driving force being: What is the essence of jazz dance and how do we teach it? More specifically, how can college dance educators effectively bridge the gap between the current understanding and practice of contemporary jazz (especially as seen on tv), while teaching with the consideration of the totality of jazz dance, including concert forms?

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I will review existing literature that I find comes closest to addressing the understanding I seek regarding teaching jazz dance in higher education, specifically addressing the three avenues of this thesis: the role of music and its effect in the studio; crucial movement and conceptual elements that help distinguish jazz; and historical foundations. Please refer to Appendix A for a glossary of terms that I will be using throughout the document. The terms and definitions contained in the glossary will guide the reader into the context in which my studies occur and bring meaning to the findings that emerge. The following review is not a complete listing of resources that highlight my interests, but rather stands as evidence of the most probing that I could uncover.

The “Jazz Dance Tree”

Kimberly Testa’s “Jazz Dance Tree” can be found in the beginning pages of the edited anthology, *Jazz Dance: A History of its Roots and Branches* published in 2014. It is

interesting to begin with this tree because it illustrates how jazz dance, since its inception, can be represented visually by a many-branched tree as it has developed over time, starting with African Roots and reaching up to branches labeled “Pop Jazz” and “Party Dances” (Oliver 2014, *xvi*). I also find that this tree is a great response to the multi-layered question, “what is jazz dance?” This illustration provides a visual representation to better understand that jazz cannot be defined as one specific stylistic art form, but rather, has grown in different directions, and is still growing. Wendy Oliver, text editor and introduction author, makes an important distinction regarding the tree. She states, “Ideally, this tree would be seen three-dimensionally, so that the intertwining of branches would be evident. Even though the branches appear to be growing apart from one another, they are in fact crisscrossing and creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts” (Oliver 2014, *xvii*). This crucial recognition not only reveals that jazz dance is ever-evolving in the way oral traditions do, but also *connectively* evolving. Using the tree, jazz dance and its development can be seen as a beautifully complicated score, composed of some of the richest individual melodic phrases that harmonize through time.

All rooted in West African Dance, jazz is now understood as a theatrical dance, a layered transition to a hip hop influenced dance and showing a foundation in many social dances we still experience today. Jazz dance scholar Karen Hubbard expressed, during a panel at the National Dance Educator’s Organization 2016 special topic Jazz Dance Conference (will be referenced “NDEO Jazz Dance Conference” throughout the remainder of document), that hip hop is an extension of jazz, further stating that to her, hip hop *is* jazz. Rebutting her comment was jazz educator and scholar, Melanie George, who stated that she believed hip hop stands on its own because of the culture it has built as a separate

entity. Personally, I see merit in both sides, but as an “80s” baby, I stand closer on the spectrum to George’s comment.

Jazz Dance and Higher Education

Jazz dance’s journey in higher education has not been easy. This is because its origins are the foundations of working class African American and Latino communities. However, jazz dance found a way to be present in college dance programs, though certainly not at the level of Eurocentric styles like modern or ballet. I find the largest gap in literature in what I view, as a direct result of the treatment or bias against jazz in higher education. Jazz dance courses in most dance programs are offered only as electives, and are utilized by students as their “fun” courses to take outside of a rigorous study in idioms that constitute their concentrated major, predominantly ballet or modern/contemporary dance. There is a current shift in higher education programs to somewhat change this paradigm some, however, it doesn’t negate the fact that jazz dance has been and is still largely misrepresented in the academy because of the view that “real technique” must be ballet or modern. However, if we value a well-rounded education for college dancers, “we have a responsibility to uplift other cultures to ensure that students do not adopt a monocultural perspective” (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 127). I believe that McCarthy-Brown’s point generates an awareness about the larger frame of life, for which we also have an obligation to prepare our students. If you look at the timeline of jazz dance in higher education according to Kim Chandler Vaccaro, jazz has been absent as an art form worthy of study.

The first dance programs in the United States were begun in the 1920s and were dominated by white, female modern dancers. Ballet, with its air of European aristocracy, soon followed and fit neatly into the system as dance began to move from physical education departments to theater and dance departments. Even as tap enjoyed some early success in college dance

programs as part of the American folk/clog dance tradition, there was, until the 1990s a curious absence of jazz dance. (Vaccaro 2014, 208)

Vaccaro exposes the fact that even though jazz dance was being developed simultaneously with modern dance in the United States, it somehow did not gain the same attention as modern or ballet. Until the 1990s, jazz dance was considered to fall under the umbrella of social dance. Being a (naturally) vernacular form, I propose that institutions of higher education before the 90's did not have the proper tools or exposure to understand, make sense of, or theorize upon jazz dance outside of the social dance context. Rather, dance studies as a discipline had not "gotten its legs underneath" enough to stand on its own to consider such ideas. This could also be said of hip hop studies before the early 2000's. In general, dance studies and popular culture studies are still relatively new areas of research focus. So, the difficult journey for jazz dance research and cultural studies in general within higher education has precedent.

Similar to today's influence and incorporation of hip hop studies as a topic of higher education study, jazz dance needed time in the eyes of academia to mature into something worthy of studying outside of Saturday nights at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. Vaccaro illustrates the work of Mura Dehn. (See Vaccaro 2014, 208-210) Dehn, a Russian immigrant and jazz dance researcher encouraged the elevation of jazz dance in the academy through her personal analysis as early as the 1930s. She dedicated most of her life to studying African American social dance and collaborated with artists like Asadata Dafora and scholars such as Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. She was one of the first advocates to educate the masses to consider jazz dance as an art form that impacts more than just the social dance scene. The rare footage she captured in the documentary, *The Spirit Moves*, displays some of the earliest jazz dancers of the Savoy Ballroom. This was

valuable to my literature search, providing a visual of early jazz movement and contributing to the historical avenue of research I emphasize in this study.

The 1960s Civil Rights Movement contributed to encouraging higher education institutions to include more programs involving African American Studies. For instance, The University of California Irvine offered jazz dance in 1965. (Vaccaro 2014, 209) She points out that the conceptual elements of jazz music and dance such as improvisation and individual expression were embraced, they were typically done so under the post-modern dance investigation found in modern dance programs. Jazz dance was still not able to stand on its own in an academic setting, though the essence of jazz was able to ride the coattails of post-modern dance exploration. The inclusion of studying pop culture in universities across the nation during the 1970s also boosted jazz dance's chances of being viewed as a higher art form, though still it remained absent. Vaccaro recognizes Oklahoma City University developing a dance program in 1981 that set its focus on American dance forms, including tap and jazz. She also reports results from her 2011 survey (sent to dance programs through National Dance Education Organization's website) showing that only one third of the programs required jazz as a part of the degree (Vaccaro 2014, 212). With increased interest in popular television shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing with the Stars*, Vaccaro emphasizes the popular pressure and concomitant push for college programs to include jazz as a major study.

She herself proposed that a one credit jazz course become a requirement for the new Bachelor of Arts that was developed at Rider University in 2011 and received full support from her colleagues. Looking at jazz dance in higher education currently, there is an expansion in jazz dance offerings occurring within colleges like the University of

Arizona, Pace University and University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Throughout the course of my research and current job search, it is apparent that there is a greater number of programs in search of instructors that specialize in vernacular dance forms like jazz, African dance, tap and musical theatre with an effort to expand their programs.

It is common that modern and ballet still dominate dance programs around the country, but jazz dance and other vernacular art forms currently sit at the center of a movement within the academy to equalize and emphasize diverse styles for a well-rounded education of college dance students. What I find most valuable in this chapter is that Vaccaro exposes the history of jazz dance's position and role in higher education; how far we've come and how far we still have, to go.

Jazz Dance and Racial Discourse

As jazz dance is a vernacular art form, it offers students a gateway into understanding and, in this case, embodying the culture of its origin. Over time, dance in higher education has expanded its curriculum to include vernacular dance forms like jazz dance as legitimate areas of study to experience through both the movement itself, and through scholarship. Looking through cultural, racial, and social lenses also exposes reasons behind the relative absence of jazz dance pedagogy discussion in higher education. Nyama McCarthy-Brown and Julie A. Kerr-Berry are dance scholars dedicated to the subject and movement of equalizing jazz dance in dance programs across the United States. Although this subject could be examined more fully with multiple world dance forms, I am only considering some of the inherent issues in reference to jazz dance, and in particular in direct correlation with jazz dance in higher education. I include McCarthy-Brown and Kerr-Berry in my review of literature to shed some light on why jazz dance is still

struggling to become an equal cohort with modern and ballet in higher education, thus making a gap in literature on teaching jazz dance.

“Decolonizing Dance Curriculum in Higher Education: One Credit at a Time” by Nyama McCarthy-Brown eloquently exposes the continued bias for Eurocentric forms of dance as the central focus in the academy. The author clearly states that a movement towards equalization of “the other” dance forms is not just necessary, but urgent. She emphasizes that higher education, “departments should embrace a more inclusive system that does not privilege particular dance forms” (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 125). She analyzed over 100 mission statements from dance departments around the U.S. and narrowed her search to three dance departments to study qualitatively. A common thread that she discovered in those 100 mission statements was the proclamation of a dedication to creating a diverse environment, while the dance curriculum structures and requirements still reflected those of a Eurocentric model. That is, a higher credit concentration rested on modern and ballet. Of the three dance departments that became the basis of her study, two presented a curriculum structure that, “privileged Western-based dance forms” (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 126). One dance department differed from this model by making all dance credit requirements equal (a total of 18 required), allowing for a student a heavier focus on styles outside modern and ballet, if they chose.

McCarthy-Brown’s most important point related to my study exposes the fact that although “other” styles of dance are present in most of the analyzed dance programs, they are offered as electives and with only one credit attached.ⁱⁱⁱ She suggests that dance programs should re-evaluate the needs of their students and begin with small changes in the degree requirements to begin to equalize dance forms in a college dance program. Her

suggestions and calls to action are great first steps towards dedicating dance programs to a diversity that most are currently seeking, specifically, bringing jazz dance to the forefront of dance training – on its own terms.

Eurocentric dance forms have experienced growth over time, but not with the same intentions as jazz. There is the Eurocentric model of why we make art that is entirely different in the vernacular. One way to look at this contrast is that like classical music, classical dance and classicism has as a focus an abstract, transcendence of the everyday, whereas vernacular expression, e.g., jazz dance, is a statement or conversation between people commenting on real subjects in real time, often with the intention of a coping with or interpreting a present real life situation. I don't propose that one tack is better than another, but that both are necessary. I've come to realize that it is important to teach this difference to students so that they may choose "how they like their art." This question was posed to me as a graduate student, and I feel that educators might benefit from asking this of all their students, so that we can act as diversifying mentors during a time when students are forming their own dance identities. Through teaching jazz dance and other vernacular art forms honoring their cultural impact, educators have the power to "offer students opportunities to develop their full identities in a manner that relates to their education" (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 127).

The continued emphasis on Eurocentric ideas in dance programs across the country is also described by Julie Kerr-Berry as "white-washed" in her 2010 article entitled, "Progress and Complacency: A 'Post-racial' Dance in Higher Education?" The author reveals similar points that are asserted by McCarthy-Brown's article - a change is needed in higher education dance programs so that equally privilege varied forms of dance. Ker-

Berry expands to further calculate the percentages of non-white faculty and student populations found in U.S. dance programs, still a very small percentage. This portion of her study was especially significant to me as it hit very close to home. The statistics that Kerr-Berry highlight exist within a department that I respect and admire. Realizing this over the last three years in my personal experience as a student and in my work as a researcher, I have committed to a role as an agent for change within jazz dance by elevating its place in the academy.

Kerr-Berry's first call to action is directed towards dance educators who teach dance history. Kerr-Berry suggests that reevaluating dance history curriculum to include "African American figures' works and dates while simultaneously addressing how social and political issues of race, class and gender affected the development of dance history" (Kerr-Berry 2010, 4). She criticizes the approach to teaching dance history from a Western and non-Western perspective, claiming that this only contributes to the ideology of separate and definitely not equal. Her solution encompasses deconstructing the current model, and reformatting in order to "level the hierarchy" (Kerr-Berry 2010, 4). Advocating for educators to "utilize their positions of power to advance the field" (Kerr-Berry 2010, 5), in order to rid the "white-washed" system in higher education dance programs, she encourages current (white) faculty members to contribute to a movement that takes dance in higher education out of the boundaries of Eurocentric thought and to be inclusive with "the other" subjects to live the definition of diversity within a program. With more educators exposing the boundaries that race and dance in higher education confront, the more progressive our students will become in a time when it is most needed.

Although jazz studies now seems to be a more prominent avenue of research and focus in higher education than in the past, it seems as though the Eurocentric preferences still bleed through music programs, similar to dance programs. An interesting aspect of this problem is the idea of auditions for music study in higher education. I discovered the next article when searching through music related information, however, I found out that it more importantly uncovers the institutional racism that can surface even during audition processes in music programs, furthering the idea that vernacular art forms do not “make the grade.”

Professor of Music Education at The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Julia Eklund Koza brings our attention to this subject through her article, “Listening for Whiteness: Hearing Racial Politics in Undergraduate School Music.” (2008) Koza introduces us to ways in which nationwide music schools camouflage *who* gets left out by highlighting *what* gets left out, starting with the audition process. She argues, “that in the auditions, the construction of musical difference, which is an effect of power and is accomplished by the materialization of categories or styles of music, plays a role in systematic inclusion or exclusion of people, whose bodies have already been sorted and ordered through a process of differencing that materializes bodies as race” (Koza 2008, 146). She explains that an elitist approach is inherently present at most auditions. Institutions no longer focus on potential because the outside market auditioning for music programs has risen. Potential students who are privileged enough to study music privately for years prior to college are cutting in line in front of those not so privileged at these auditions. K-12 and church choir education is no longer enough. This elitist approach directly relates to a racial component of this problem. She highlights that there is still an

emphasis placed on favoring Eurocentric orchestral music, and states that students are literally discouraged from auditioning with a “jazz, pop, rock, folk or other musical theatre repertoire” (Koza 2008, 148).

Koza even addresses counter arguments that she might face (or has faced) in response to her claims. She quickly asserts that discrimination and racial preference can be accomplished without any kind of acknowledgement to race. By stating *what* should be left out of the academy auditions also indicates *who* should be left out. She has termed this kind of academic categorizing as “binning,” to which she attributes to be a main issue regarding racial politics in higher education. She inserts a radical solution approach by questioning, “given the firmly entrenched systems of reasoning about school music at the undergraduate level and the apparent lack of incentive for change, should schools of music get out of the business of training music teachers” (Koza 2008, 153)? But instead, she encourages music educators to begin to “listen for whiteness” and acknowledge it, and join the movement to “defunding it.”

The above assertions are directly applicable to the racial politics and Eurocentric preferences found in higher education dance programs. If this is still happening in music education, and jazz music is still fighting to be taken seriously as an art form, is there any hope for jazz dance? I like to think that there is, especially with the racial tensions that continue to permeate our country. It is also the responsibility of dance programs to similarly “listen for whiteness” throughout their curricular revisions. As stated before, change takes time, and admitting to a model that is problematic because of the racial barriers it has mounted, directly or indirectly, is not easy. But it is more important, and in my opinion,

more time sensitive than ever, to address a curriculum in music and dance that systematically excludes certain cultures and people.

Although it is important to raise the topic of institutional racism in dance found in higher education, it is not the main focus of this research. Moreover, it is a challenge that extends beyond specific departments and the topics addressed in this thesis as all areas of study on a college campus are confronted with the privileging of Eurocentric modes of teaching and subjects. Particularly in the context of teaching jazz dance, racial discourse is something that cannot be ignored, as it is a part of the history of jazz dancing and of our country at large, as well as the social context from which the dance movements themselves have sprung. The lack of discussion on teaching jazz dance cannot be narrowed to this one topic, but instead, much like the jazz dance tree introduced earlier in this chapter, is best undertaken as a result of multiple reasonings and branches – racial discourse being a branch often ignored.

Teaching the Music of Movement

The use of music in a jazz dance class is a topic not without controversy of its own. Sharing the same name as the musical genre, it might seem logical to train and perform jazz dance to traditional jazz music. Indeed, this connection is part of the rich history. Dancer, scholar and choreographer, Billy Siegenfeld discusses this classroom controversy. This writing was originally published in the magazine, *Dance Teacher Now* in 1990 and is titled “If Jazz Dance, Then Jazz Music!” (Siegenfeld 2014, 17-23) Siegenfeld begins by referencing Marshall Stearns’ 1959 article “Is Modern Jazz Dance Hopelessly Square?” and Stearns’ remarks on the lack of syncopation in the jazz movement that classifies it as such. Siegenfeld writes, “I wholeheartedly agree that dancing that does not reflect the

rhythmic characteristics of jazz music cannot be considered true jazz dancing” (Siegenfeld 2014, 18). To support this, Siegenfeld dives into detailed descriptions of syncopation, polyrhythms, and swing that are required in traditional jazz music and argues that jazz movements should also reflect these same qualities. He clarifies syncopation as “a clash between two partners of this so-called polyrhythm results in the production of accents not on but off the downbeats of the foundation rhythm” (Siegenfeld 2014, 17). The constant use and exploration of syncopation is essential to what makes jazz dance (and jazz music), jazz – and it is one of the things that makes jazz dance and music challenging.

He acknowledges that current trends in the use of music in jazz dance lean on rock-n-roll tunes. Siegenfeld suggests that the rock-n-roll genre isn’t the best option for jazz dancers because the movement tends to “accent the only accents in this rhythm alone” (Siegenfeld 2014, p. 19), which is a two-four or four-four, even-metered rhythm. The exploration of syncopation, rhythm, and ultimately, the feeling of swing (another topic entirely) is what makes jazz dance attractive, virtuosic, and exciting. Discussing his choreographic and training techniques incorporated in his company, Jump Rhythm Jazz Project®, he writes at length on polyrhythmic exercises that help produce the Jump Rhythm Technique® in addition to Standing Down Straight®, both methods to which he has notably codified. He also emphasizes and interprets the “motional qualities” of musical terms like *staccato*, *legato* and *sforzando*. His continued focus on balancing “ground rhythm” and “jump rhythm” is the essence of his choreographic explorations in addition to his praxis and pedagogical philosophies in jazz dance.

As a product of the dance competition sector of jazz dance training to mostly pop and rock music, I find myself somewhat conflicted with Siegenfeld’s position. However, I

also find truth in his words regarding the necessities of syncopation, swing and focus on rhythmic quality to be as elemental to jazz dancing. I feel that through my training to pop and rock-n-roll music, I was still introduced to these concepts as important elements of jazz. Siegenfeld's writing ignites my curiosities regarding the questioning that was put upon the jazz music genre over time; what about jazz-rock, jazz-funk, fusion or avant-garde jazz? Are those experimentations not considered jazz, and more importantly, would they not be encouraged to enhance the teaching of jazz dance? The lines are blurred for these genres of jazz when it comes to meeting the standards for the jazz music canon, but I think they have a contributing role in the growth of jazz music *and dance*, furthering the constant motion of the jazz dance tree. As a future educator and scholar, I'm interested in not only celebrating the classics and standards of jazz dance and music, but also including other styles and musical choices that can expand the discussion of jazz dance in the academy, and more importantly, utilizing these musical tools to teach the essence of jazz dance. One might even argue that this sort of inclusion is part of the jazz legacy and vitality.

Jazz dance scholars and professors are constantly innovating ways to approach teaching jazz dance, particularly with the emphasis on use of music in the classroom. Professor Erinn Liebhard has written an article entitled, "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got Musicality: A Music-First Method for Teaching Historically Rooted Jazz Dance." (2015) This article reflects upon her experimentation with a music-primary jazz dance course that she developed over three years with different types of student demographics. She defines key terms that are often seen in jazz dance: social, presentational, jazz dance and vernacular. Prefacing the reveal of her jazz course, Liebhard delivers a strong defense of the validity of her approach, with the assertion that the jazz dance and music relationship

is a “carrier of cultural knowledge” and “encourages complex musicality” within the skillset of a dancer (Liebhard 2015, 160). These benefits could result in a more versatile performer. She also states that there’s great benefit to this course residing in higher education because it includes multiple facets of an important dance style in one course. This course contributes to her effort to bridge the gap that she feels lies between jazz dance historical knowledge and today’s practice.

Liebhard’s course, “Jump Into Jazz” presents a breakdown of main jazz music elements that also branched into subtopics for review. “Rhythm, Syncopation and Swing, Melody, Form/Structure, Harmony, Timbre, Improvisation, Interaction and the Whole Sound” are the units of study within her curriculum (Liebhard 2015, 161-163). Each heading is paired with a brief summary of historical jazz events/musical trends of a certain time period relating to the topic, along with an applicable exercise for the students to connect historical information to the moving body. The conclusion of the course does not discuss current trends in jazz dance. As the course is designed to emphasize an historical approach to jazz music and dance, without considering the possibilities that lie ahead, Liebhard does not incorporate a pop music element, which could be addressed and experimented with to great effect. Despite these understandable omissions, Liebhard has contributed greatly to the discussion of teaching jazz dance in the academy through the development of this course. It offers another approach to teaching jazz dance in higher education, combining historic and technical elements of the curriculum through a musical focus.

Comparing Liebhard’s approach to Siegenfeld’s brings to the fore an older argument about what is or is not considered jazz music. Liebhard incorporates electronic

music that samples jazz music, early American folk music, blues and contemporary jazz artists in addition to fusion sounds to emphasize her topics (Liebhard 2015, 161-163). Siegenfeld doesn't necessarily identify specific musical genres, artists or bands, but does state that his music must emphasize and assist with educating the rhythmic characteristics of jazz. I find this comparison valuable in considering the topic of teaching jazz dance in the academy, and I believe that both approaches are useful. With my own personal inquiries about the future of jazz dance and its role in higher education, I think that my teaching approach is developed with more flexible musical choice, closer to Liebhard's pairings for her weekly lessons. Specific musical choices (and specific songs) are included in my detailed lesson plans for the course, with the goal of utilizing music to introduce important jazz movement and conceptual elements. For a sample lesson plan, see Appendix B.

A result of constant play with rhythm in jazz dance produces a dynamic movement vocabulary. Jazz dance movement is a direct reflection and embodiment of a musically rhythmic exploration. The brilliant historian and musicologist Albert Murray, contextualizes this in *Stomping the Blues* (1976), in the chapter "Swinging the Blues." Reflecting on the trail of the popularization of blues bands he writes:

Because whatever else it was used for it was always mostly dance music. Even when it was being performed as an act in a variety show on a vaudeville stage, the most immediate and customary response consisted of such foot tapping, hand clapping, body rocking, and hip rolling came as close to total dance movement as the facilities and the occasion would allow. Nor was the response likely to be anything except more of the same when the most compelling lyrics were being delivered by Ma Rainey or Bessie Smith, whose every stage gesture, by the way, was also as much dance movement as anything else. (Murray 1976, 138)

When reading this excerpt, I crave the music Murray is honoring because of the description of the movement it produces! This excerpt helps define an understanding of the

rhythmic-dynamic qualities jazz dance possesses. More importantly, it illustrates how to view those qualities as one unit – rhythmic *and* dynamic. Not uncommon to most vernacular expressions or in the Diaspora, the music and dance are married – and in jazz dance, rhythm is married to dynamism. As Murray asserts:

Because such dance steps as consisted of bumping and bouncing, dragging and stomping, hopping and jumping, rocking and rolling, shaking and shouting, and the like, were (and are) precisely what all the percussive incantation was (and still is) all about in the first place; and obviously such movements add up to a good time regardless of the lyrics. Purification and celebration/affirmation without a doubt. (Murray 1976, 138)

Murray’s description of the movement could also be musical descriptors, thus producing a dynamic sound *and* dance. As a participant in jazz dance, you feel very close to the music; the goal is to interact, embody or even at times, keep up with the music. Jazz music and dance have assertive virtuosity and it is mirrored in the idiomatic training. Syncopated accenting is often called “sharp.” Further, the articulated rhythm phrasing affects a dancer’s treatment of weight. Phrasing and accenting exploration could also be smooth and fluid treatment of movement. These concepts can benefit dancers practicing any idiom with only positive influence! Scholar Jacqui Malone says it best: a vernacular form like jazz dance, “automatically ensures a certain degree of dynamism because the demands of the audience for dynamic invention and virtuosity prevent the performer from delivering static reproductions of familiar patterns or imitations of someone else’s hard-earned style” (2003, 233).

Jazz Music History and Higher Education

Music considerations in the jazz dance class meets at an interesting crossroads with jazz music as a program of study in higher education. As discussed earlier, jazz music has always struggled with proving itself to be an art form worthy of study in the context of

higher education. Surely a bridge exists between the absence of discussions on teaching and practicing jazz dance in higher education and the struggle jazz music has had situating itself in the academy. Why would anyone talk about jazz dance, if no one is talking about jazz music? Taking a brief historical look at the history of jazz music, it is notable that jazz music was danceable until the 1940s when bebop took the stage. Artists like Dizzy Gillespie (a Big Band favorite) and Charlie Parker reinvented jazz music through a display of virtuosity and performance focus on the art itself, disregarding the audience (Bierman 2016, 193-204). We also find that it was in constant competition with orchestral Eurocentric music when it came to an art form worthy of study outside the gigs and learning through the streets; the vernacular tradition.

Drummer Art Blakey was one of the pioneering jazz artists to begin to formulate the praxis and pedagogy of jazz music in an academic model. He formed *Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers* and it served as a school of music rather than just another jazz band (Bierman 2016). This was the first time that jazz music was viewed and practiced personifying the academy. Prior to this, jazz artists earned their education through joining jazz bands, gigging, and jamming with other popular jazz artists on a regular basis in their daily lives in a grand, oral tradition.

History and Teaching Jazz Dance

History education naturally highlights pioneers in a particular field of study. In dance, the historical pioneers referenced are typically white males that contributed greatly to the realm of musical theatre and the “Silver Screen” between 1950-1980s with the notable exception of the Nicholas Brothers and a few others. These individual artists have supplied the field of jazz dance with a wealth of knowledge, tools, art, and entertainment,

however, the history of jazz dance goes back much farther than that; starting with West African dancing that was transmitted to the United States during the slave trade during the 17th century. Although jazz in musical theatre is widely spoken about in a jazz dance classroom, origins in minstrelsy and vaudeville are not. The social dance boom of the 1920s and 1930s produced dances like “The Big Apple,” “Ballin’ the Jack” and the “Lindy Hop” that are written as representations of early jazz dance. But, when Bebop of the 1940s took over, jazz music, with its breakneck tempos, quickly became undanceable. With “jazz dance all dressed up with nowhere to go,” it naturally injected itself into mainstream entertainment. Noteworthy artists like Frankie Manning, the Nicholas Brothers, Katherine Dunham, Bill “Bo Jangles” Robinson, Jack Cole, Bob Fosse, and Jerome Robbins choreographed for the Broadway stage and Hollywood films. Pop versions of jazz artists like Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin also went this route. In my training, this historical information was absent. I now feel that it is crucial to return to the roots of a subject to truly honor what was, acknowledge the present, and innovate what is to come.

University Professor Karen Hubbard, current Associate Professor of Dance at University of North Carolina at Charlotte has developed (since the 1980s) a college level studio course that centers on what she terms, “traditional jazz dance.” In total, Hubbard moves through the jazz history time line of early African roots onto the 1920s-Present. “In this course, students are given the opportunities to learn about jazz dance from the perspective of African-American culture; the source of origin of the major dance crazes” (Hubbard 2008, 110). In writing about the course, Hubbard addresses her own jazz training with Pepsi Bethel, to which she indicates influenced her graduate studies and the development of this course. She lists the course description, and what I find most

interesting is that her traditional jazz course is the only jazz course required for the dance majors and minors at UNC Charlotte, where she teaches. Hubbard's course begins with an introduction of West African dance and the connection it has with jazz dance. She specifically reviews the physical aesthetics, rhythmic emphasis and necessity of swing. I appreciate that she acknowledges how difficult it is to define "swing" from a musical and movement perspective and in turn, provides multiple dialogs defining this term from an array of professional jazz dancers and scholars. The course also reviews what it means to be cool, and articulates improvisation as a tool used for "embellishing rather than inventing" (Hubbard 2008, 112).

The course begins with an interactive warm-up, consisting of call and response between the dancer and (often live) musicians, opportunities for individual improvisation, isolations and the review of "historical sequences" or phrases that are worked on later in the class hour. After that is completed, the class moves onto progressions that introduce traditional jazz steps like "Pickin' Cherries" (Hubbard 2008, 113). By repeating these progressions, students build their historical jazz dance vocabulary that can be eventually crossed over into warm up and improvisational moments. The same occurs when the class begins to learn stylized sequences that she has accumulated over time studying with different jazz artists. These sequences are taught chronologically, which also contribute to understanding the historical timeline of jazz dance. Some sequences taught are "The Big Apple," "Shim Sham Shimmy" and "Class Act" (Hubbard 2008, 114). The conclusion of her course consists of experimenting with "contemporary jazz" which she interprets by teaching a phrase from Ailey jazz director and teacher, Fred Benjamin. The final day of

class is dedicated to what Hubbard calls a “faux hip-hop dance sequence” that explores “contemporary popular entertainment culture” (Hubbard 2008, 115).

By introducing students to the elements of West African dance, Hubbard brings her students closer to jazz dance from a deep, originating place, rather than approaching the class from a movement-only focus. Importantly, she acknowledges that the exposure of how the “jazz attitude” can be easily misinterpreted by individuals who have never experienced Black Culture.^{iv} She references teachers that may fall under this category as only viewing or understanding Black Dance as a type of celebration or liberating experience for fun. As these ideals are passed onto students who typically register for her class, “energy” and “excitement” behind jazz dancing can be misconstrued. “Unfortunately, this approach reinforces stereotypes about blacks and bypasses the jazz attitude completely” (Hubbard 2008, 112).

Hubbard also states, “however, since the movement material focuses on style and rhythm instead of technique, all students have the possibility of completing the course successfully” (Hubbard 2008, 111). Hubbard has a unique view of technique; her class technique could very well be the essence of jazz, not just shapes in space that classic jazz elicits. As a result, the question now arising is: Does musical and stylistic knowledge fall outside of what constructs a jazz technician? As I am also still trying to understand the definition of technique in a jazz context, Hubbard fails to provide an explanation of her perception of technique, but luckily reveals it to me during a personal interview! I also wish that “faux hip-hop dance” was elaborated. Because it was not, and it only happens on the final day of the class, I wonder what Hubbard thinks about the direction jazz dance will take in the future. Her jazz dance focus is the historical context, but jazz dance is not a

static art form. Since the publication in 2008, I wonder if any alterations have been made to the course to consider the most current trends in jazz dance, while still reflecting and studying the history of the art form.

I would like to point out that this is a great example of the value of studying vernacular expression and why it should be taken even more seriously in the departments of humanities and the arts. There is the Eurocentric model of why we make art that is entirely different in the vernacular. Similar to classical music, classical dance and the classical aesthetic focuses on transcending or even denying the everyday, whereas vernacular expression, like jazz dance, is a statement or conversation between people commenting on raw subjects in real time, often with the intention of coping with or interpreting a present, real life situation. Albert Murray beautifully articulates this throughout *Stomping the Blues*, particularly in the excerpt I included above. By studying a vernacular art form like jazz, students gain not only an understanding of the art itself, but the culture that formed the art, resulting in a more well-rounded education. Through teaching jazz dance and other vernacular art forms honoring their cultural impact, educators have the power to “offer students opportunities to develop their full identities in a manner that relates to their education” (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 127).

As a reader, I am interested in taking her class due to her expertise and experience in jazz history. Hubbard’s contribution to the field of jazz is so important because it speaks to the fact that jazz dance does not exist in a vacuum, although it can appear that way. Courses like Hubbard’s, taught through a historical lens, cancels out the vacuum notion and provides a context for students to understand not just the history, but a movement

vocabulary to relate to in current practices of jazz. This kind of teaching answers all of the questions we are after as instructors: who, what, when, where, why and how.

Considering dance history curriculum would provide successful strategies that jazz dance educators implement into the studio. Using George Balanchine's, *Funeral March*, Dr. Elizabeth Kattner, dance historian and educator, has developed a special way to combine movement and traditional dance history class material to enhance a student's dance history experience. Dr. Kattner has a unique interest and skill set in reconstructing historical work without video footage. Contemplating how to improve dance history education to skilled dance majors, she believes that "movement in conjunction with academic material can help them understand and retain what they are taught and will enable them to see how dance history is important to them as dancers" (Kattner 2016, 4). Ms. Kattner uses Balanchine's *Funeral March* as the piece to be reconstructed and begins with placing "primary and secondary sources" in and around the studio to assist with compiling the work. Primary sources in this case are "two extant pictures of Vera Kostrovitskaya and Nina Stukolkina demonstrating positions from the ballet" in addition to her own hand written notes and audio recordings that she has gathered from the New York Public Library (Kattner 2016, 7). Secondary sources include writings from other scholars regarding the work, in addition to writings by "witnesses" who were present during the making of *Funeral March* in 1923.

Using these primary and secondary sources, students are guided through a barre set to ragtime music selected by Kattner. This gives her the opportunity to reveal Balanchine's early years as a musician and how his musicianship traveled into his creations, often syncopating movement. More importantly, and what could also be applied to jazz dance

and music, she claims that, “this explanation meets the fourth goal, teaching how choreographic structure can relate to the cultural and social aspects of dance history” (Kattner 2016, 7). Continuing through five other steps in the workshop, students use photos, writings and witness accounts to replicate movement, entrances and exits and interpret musical cues for which certain sections may have occurred. Although the result of reconstruction is most likely not exactly like the original version, students actively participate, cognitively and kinesthetically, in reconstructing an historical work. While Kattner has developed a workshop that allows students to look into the past, she, more importantly, sees her workshop as inspiration for students to create into the future. “Exploring the work and process that a master went through in developing his artistic voice can not only inspire students as they strive to find their voice, but can provide them with impetus to pursue their own work, both creative and scholarly” (Kattner 2016, 9).

She concludes the article with a call to action upon the entire dance field to “develop more than just the next generation of strong dancers and choreographers” (Kattner 2016, 10). Further, she advocates for the training of scholarship among students; and historical context is one answer. Her method is very applicable to jazz dance, and it would be of interest to instructors and students to experience jazz dance history in this way. Her emphasis on context, and how providing specific, historical context brings even more meaning to the current experience a dancer engages in and holds great merit. Providing historical context in jazz dance gives students a one-way ticket to being an insider in the conversation versus an outsider; historical understanding allows students to *participate in* and *experience* American history, not just read or talk about it. History is powerful, and

jazz dance instructors should capitalize on the strong forces it projects – kinesthetically, cognitively and socially.

Conclusion

Mindfully teaching jazz dance as discussed here can build a unique form of strength within a dancer. Raw and honest expression filled with a deep history of real people from a real time and place permeates jazz dance and provides a dancer an opportunity to gain a sense of self in the world at large. As jazz dance stands equally in focus with modern and ballet, the emerging of well-rounded dancers is inevitable – benefitting both the performance and education realms of dance as a whole.

Reviewing the literature mentioned above in addition to many others that can be found in the bibliography, there is a way to enhance how we teach the essence of jazz dance to undergraduate college dance students. Based on the information discussed in these existing pieces of literature and considering the three avenues of research I propose here, it is clear that jazz dance can deepen a dancer's training in specific ways. Why would we exclude the education that jazz dance can provide for students - especially with its origins rooted in our own soil? Although I was able to uncover scholarly contributions regarding music, racial discourse, higher education and dance history, and their relationship with jazz dance, I was not satisfied with findings on jazz dance movement and conceptual elements. Therefore, I was unable to include literature on this subject. All of the movement literature that I found was in a sort of manual format; a model that I have already expressed does not provide the kind information that I am seeking for this particular research. With this discovery, I question if my search expectations are too high. Is it realistic to find text that speaks about jazz movement or conceptual elements in a holistic way? Or maybe this

information is a call to action on my part. Maybe, this is revealing of what my career will look like; scholarly contributions to the holistic jazz training, specifically covering movement and conceptual elements that are essential to revealing the essence of jazz dance.

For now, my response to this call for action is to develop a 10-week course that will be an experiment using university dance students as subjects in the Fall of 2016. The development and structure of this course is based on a coding of interviews with master instructors, experiences and discussion gathered from attending NDEO's Jazz Dance Conference and my own pedagogical curiosities and inquiries. The course I developed will never remain absolute, but I hope uncovers approaches that successfully support how to teach the essence of jazz dance, employing students to experience jazz dance from the past, present and future.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make, the better.” In my thesis “experiment” my purpose is to contribute to the conversation about teaching jazz dance in higher education. I drew upon teaching models from the past, current scholars, and my own teaching philosophy to develop a jazz dance class informed by this research. For the purposes of this study, I divide the experiment into two phases: Phase I and Phase II. It was necessary to divide my work into two phases because the master instructor interviews and attending the jazz dance conference would inform my conception, development, and implementation of an “informed” jazz class. Time also was a factor in determining two different phases, as the interviews and conference occurred in the summer of 2016, before the class itself would be tested in the fall of 2016. For the purposes of writing a clear and concise thesis document, the first phase was divided into two sub-phases as follows:

- Phase I-A: Master Instructor Interviews
- Phase I-B: NDEO Jazz Dance Conference Immersion
- Phase II: Course Development and Implementation

Each phase of research was rooted in three avenues of focus: the role of music and its effect in the studio, historical foundations, and essential movement or elemental concepts that define jazz dance.

Phase I-A – Master Instructor Interviews

Phase I-A consisted of master instructor interviews as a means of gathering practical information about how jazz dance is taught by masters. I chose four individuals

considered experts in the field of jazz dance who currently teach and write about jazz dance in higher education, the environment in which I also teach:

- **Danny Buraczski** – Professor of Dance at Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas
- **Karen Hubbard** – Associate Professor of Dance at University of North Carolina - Charlotte
- **Billy Siegenfeld** – Professor of Theatre at Northwestern University, School of Communication in Evanston, Illinois and Director of Jump Rhythm Jazz Project
- **Cathy Young** – Director of the Dance Division, The Boston Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts

The interview questions were structured according to the three avenues of focus. The interview questions were developed to elucidate different perspectives on the avenues of my research. Twenty questions were conceived that would bring some clarity to the topics (the three avenues) that I was interested in investigating. For the actual interview questions, please see Appendix C. The information and perceptions gathered from these master instructors assisted in developing Phase II of the thesis research, and constituted a qualitative method of research. These coded (open and axial) interview results would eventually uncover not only the interviewees' personal values as instructors, but also provide me with some tools to consider while developing the course.

Phase I-A (Master Instructor Interviews): Recruitment

Post University of Oregon Institutional Review Board approval, Phase I recruitment of interviewees occurred by email, extending an invitation to participate in the research. The master instructor's email and other contact information was found on websites of their respective affiliated universities.

Phase I-A (Master Instructor Interview): Data Collection

Each interview was conducted during the Spring of 2016 and carried out via Skype, or in person at the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference. Each interview lasted between 60-90 minutes, audio recorded, and faithfully transcribed by myself as the principal investigator. A copy of the questions was emailed to interviewees prior to the scheduled interview. Then, each participant was asked the same set of questions, in the same order in a formal interview. Post-interview, the participants received a copy of the transcript of their interview. This core qualitative information provided ample material for coding. Coding was the chosen method for sifting through the information because it could provide descriptive and interpretable results that would better support my qualitative research.

Phase I-B – NDEO Jazz Dance Conference

As an augmentation to my research preparation and a happy coincidence, I attended the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference in Newport, Rhode Island from Sunday, July 31, 2016 to Wednesday, August 3, 2016. The conference consisted of movement workshops, panels, discussions, and social events that focused on many topics that fall under the jazz dance umbrella. The purpose of the conference according to NDEO's website was as follows:

Join NDEO in Newport, Rhode Island, where jazz has come alive every summer since the first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954. Together, we will explore jazz dance from its roots to many contemporary offshoots while enjoying the beautiful facilities and views of our oceanfront host, Salve Regina University. Inspired by *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches* (University of Florida Press: 2014), edited by Lindsay Guarino and Wendy Oliver, this conference will look at jazz dance broadly through movement workshops and conversations, inviting dialogue that connects the past, present, and future of jazz. (NDEO Website, 2016)

The featured conference presenters and teachers were several of the authors that contributed to the groundbreaking *Jazz Dance: A History of its Roots and Branches*;

including all of the interviewees for this thesis research. Others present included vernacular dance scholars: Melanie George, Moncell Durden, Sheron Wray, Bob Boross, and Darwin Prioleau.

During the conference, I attended master dance classes and experienced jazz dance “techniques” and approaches to facilitating the teaching of jazz movement. The information gathered during these master classes, as well as topics discussed during open panel and discussion sessions, greatly influenced the organization of my jazz class lesson plans for the Fall study. For a full list of the classes and instructors attending the conference, please see Appendix D.

Phase I-B (Jazz Conference): Data Collection

As a conference participant and researcher, I took copious notes after each class and during each discussion; observing and taking advantage of every learning opportunity. These notes/reflections were addressed during the development of an intermediate/advanced level (specifically, Jazz III at the University of Oregon) jazz course for the academy by contributing ideas inspired by educators outside of my interview circle. I borrowed exercises/movement that were positive and memorable experiences for me. The conference served as a rigorous immersion and update on the state of jazz dance and jazz dance pedagogy for all that attended. I believe that this is one of the most important contributions that conferences can offer. Collectively standing back and looking at a constantly changing art form can inform jazz educators and practitioners of the current state of jazz dance, and will undoubtedly fuel discussions about its future in and outside of the academy.

Phase II – Course Development and Course Implementation

The information from the interviews, personal notes from the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference, review of literature and inclusion of my own personal teaching philosophies melded in the development of Phase II: a lesson plan/blue print for the implementation of an intermediate/advanced Jazz III course at the University of Oregon that I instructed and facilitated. Lesson plans were carefully constructed on a week by week basis to focus on the three avenues that were the focus of this thesis.

Phase II Recruitment

A flyer advertising the course and my study was posted throughout the dance building and also in an adjacent building. The students who registered for the course were considered potential research participants, though participation was voluntary; a subset of students became the subjects of the actual study. Post Institutional Review Board approval, I reviewed the participant consent form with all students on the first day of class. After reviewing the consent form, students were encouraged to participate. If a student agreed to participate, they signed a consent form and turned it into my advisor. These forms resided secure from my knowledge throughout the study.

Phase II Course Development

Utilizing the Jazz III course, DANC 375, was a 10-week course meeting twice weekly for fifty minutes. Nine students finalized the enrollment in the course, and the class was held in Gerlinger Annex, room 354. Students (both majors and non-majors) who have completed Jazz I and II, or possess sufficient jazz dance training are eligible to take the course for degree credit. These lesson plans were flexible in nature, and were re-worked as the course progressed based on perceptions of the educational needs of the students, and

unexpectedly, the nature of the social environment surrounding the Fall term. Please refer back to Appendix A for a sample flexible lesson plan for one week out of the term.

Considering the master instructor interviews, experiences from the conference, information I gathered from the Jazz History music course and my new found love for swing dancing and its historical connection to jazz, I decided to organize the course along a jazz music and dance historical timeline ranging from early 1900s to late 1990s. The branches of the Testa tree (Oliver 2014, *xvi*) that I felt I could speak to and teach consisted of the vernacular trunk, the musical theatre branch in addition to the pop jazz branch. We spent weeks 1-3 on vernacular jazz dance learning the Shim Sham and other vernacular dance steps like “Boogie Woogie,” “Pickin’ Cherries,” and the “Mess Around,” listening to artists like Duke Ellington and Chick Webb. Weeks 4-6 were dedicated to introducing 1950s Bebop jazz and musical theatre – learning combinations to both Brubeck’s “Take 5” and doing musical theatre choreography to Judy Garland’s “Get Happy” from the musical, *Summer Stock*. Weeks 7-10 explored pop jazz through the lens of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and the popular music of each decade. This last segment consisted of a follow-the-leader set warmup, and emulated what dancers might experience in a private studio jazz class. I choreographed a combination to Janet Jackson’s “Control,” and coupled this with viewing clips from *Flashdance*, emphasizing the historical aesthetic of jazz during that time, and also the incorporation of hip hop into the jazz dance conversation.

From the coded information, and reflection of the summer conference experience, I was able to borrow and put into practice the following:

- Using jazz music according to a historical timeline (i.e.: Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Weather Report, etc.). This was inspired by all of the master instructors. This provided the class with a wide variety of jazz music to listen to and experience in their dancing.

- The Rhythm Train exercise – inspired by Sheron Wray’s session at the jazz dance conference.
- Warm ups as a tool for building classroom community – inspired by both the master instructors’ views on community and Darwin Prioleau’s workshop at the conference.
- Incorporation of Improvisation – Warm up was where this went into practice most, and I additionally tried a footwork improvisation from Erin Liebhard’s article, *It Don’t Mean a Thing if it Ain’t Got Musicality*.
- Midterm Assignment: Utilize jazz dancing seen on the tv series, *So You Think You Can Dance* and ask the students to analyze and determine if what they view is or isn’t, jazz. This assignment was inspired by Melanie George during a discussion panel at the conference.
- Vernacular Dancing – inspired by the writing and teachings of Karen Hubbard. She provided a vernacular movement vocabulary for me to further research and incorporate during the first three weeks of the course.

Outside these borrowed ideas, I structured class regularly with warmup sequences including pliés and tendus in addition to using across-the-floor patterns to introduce final phrase material in a compartmentalized fashion, admittedly, a traditional dance class format. Some of my old well-heeled teaching strategies resurfaced, for example, what I call “the flying and falling” exercise that challenges balance and weight change. This exercise was initially inspired by one of my own jazz mentors, Myles Thoroughgood. I myself, found a way to be creative in class by organizing the students’ final choreographic assignment. Students were asked to choreograph 2-3 minutes of “jazz” movement to a pop song that was currently on the radio. Their assignment challenge was to make it “swing” and find a way for the dance to be interesting within a pop, straight 4/4 meter. I then chose a jazz song, without advance group knowledge what my choice would be, and they had to

instantly perform their choreography to determine if swing allowed for new phrasing to adjust to a new song.

The course as a whole was comprised of mixing the information gathered and coded from the master instructor interviews, the conference experience, and also my own past training elements, all the while, still leaving room for me to feel innovative.

Phase II Data Collection

Throughout the duration of the course, I wanted students to reflect on their personal experiences as a participant, but also find a way to have them respond about the three main avenues I focused on in my research and in the course, itself. Data collection for Phase II consisted of the following:

- Weekly anonymous student survey questions or prompts via Canvas – electronic log.
- Anonymous participant “free write” journals – handwritten log.
- Personal observations through my experience as the instructor.

By using these three modes of data collection, a range of class perspectives was collected and results were considered relatively representative.

- Weekly Anonymous Student Survey Questions (Please see Appendix E for a sample)
 - Research participants were asked one question per week pertaining to the material addressed in class and the three avenues that are the focal point of this study. These questions are qualitative in nature, probing their personal experience with the weekly class topic. I aligned these questions with the Phase I interview questions, as they conjure answers directly related to the three main avenues of inquiry in this study.

- Utilizing UO's online Learning Management System (LMS), I published one question per week, for two reasons; (1) to minimize the workload for the students and (2) to ensure that students were answering the survey questions in sequence.
- Research participants recorded and organized their responses electronically (typed – via Word document. Once the term was complete, students had a deadline to email their electronic survey answers to my advisor. To eliminate risk to the subjects and to promote integrity of the study, I did not review them until after grades were entered.
- Anonymous Participant Free-Write Journals
 - Participants kept personal, hand written journals that contained weekly reflections. The journal writings were not prompted by the principal investigator.
 - Research participants had a deadline of Friday, December 9, 2016 at 5:00pm to *physically* turn in their hand written journals to faculty advisor, Christian Cherry. I did not review them until after grades were entered.
 - Due to the open framework of the entries, unlike the student surveys, I hypothesized that the journal entries could introduce new or different ideas with regard to the class and the participants' experiences. Journal feedback can inform the PI of other considerations that could be made in teaching jazz dance. It was important that I provide and include both types of student responses to contribute a broad range of information to my qualitative research.

- Personal Observations During the 10-Week Jazz III Course (Please see Appendix F for a sample of my personal notes)
 - A phenomenological lens was used to interpret data collected from my own experiences as the instructor – shifts in the class –physical, visual, or environmental.
 - Phenomenology is a research lens through which “man lives in-the-midst-of-the world, as he experiences himself and the world, keenly and acutely, before any kind of reflection whatsoever takes place” (Sheets-Johnstone, 1966). In other words, an individual and experience are not viewed as two separate entities, but rather, as a collective team, and can be a legitimate research tool for inquiry. The phenomenological approach is useful in dance research because often, the experience of dance/movement *is* the research. The experience of moving is the question, the experiment, and the result wrapped into one. Therefore, the phenomenological lens is particularly useful in artistic research of the body.
 - One hour after each 50-minute class was dedicated to personal documentations of my experiences as the instructor. The time required to record my experiences varied: some took a full 1 hour debrief time, and sometimes I only needed 20 minutes. It was most efficient to keep my reflections logged electronically. These observations assisted in the evaluation portion of the study; uncovering what “worked,” what “didn’t work,” reactions from students and their demonstrated abilities to accomplish a task delivered with my teaching skills.

- Comparing my notes to those of the student surveys and journal entries highlighted the successes, failures, and discoveries of the 10-week course experiment.

Coding the Data Collected from Phase I and Phase II

Coding was the dominant means of data collection and assessment method throughout the study, thereby constituting a qualitative research method. The master instructor interviews, student canvas survey, and student free-write journals were all coded, both openly and axially. By coding the information collected in Phase I and II, parallel and salient concepts were exposed, ultimately to contribute to the conversation of teaching jazz dance in higher education. Details of the coding can be found in Chapter IV; analysis and interpretation of the coding can be found in Chapter V.

Open Coding

The first layer of open coding illuminated main ideas and subcategories of those main ideas. Colored highlighting was used during this process: **Purple** represented the main idea or answer to the question, **Blue** represented a subcategory or expansion of the main idea and **Green** illuminated specific descriptions or movements that were directly related to the main ideas. For example, here is an example of a coded answer to the interview question: How do you define technique?

CY: That's a great question. So this is off the top of my head because I didn't prepare.

LJS: LOL.

CY: You know I would say that technique is the skill set that allows you to do the movement you want to do in the most full and efficient way. So, to me and I'm going to talk about this, this afternoon.

LJS: Ok.

CY: The technique, the definition of technique has to be fluid depending upon what kind of dancing you are talking about. I think the word technique is used as an umbrella to mean classical ballet technique, which is one of

many, many techniques. So in jazz for me, technique needs to be about getting the dancer grounded, getting a lot of mobility through the pelvis, and the spine. The ability to articulate the limbs and the feet. The ability to move in a poly centric way. I think in jazz you have to be able to move through line. But I agree with Billy that Jazz Dance is an Africanist form, so it is about energy, over shape. It is not about shape. You move through shape, but it is about energy.

LJS: Yeah.

CY: Impulse, where it goes. And, so specific stuff for me that I really work on technically is getting dancers to drop their weight through their heels, so that their quads can relax, so they're supported by their ham strings, which allows the hips to open up. I work a lot on finding a comfortable rotation in second that allows for a really deep pliés and the actual engagement of the inner thigh, to support rotation, but not the extreme rotation that you would see in ballet, because that locks the hips up.

Open coding exposed the following results for: How do you define technique?

- The skill set that allows you to do the movement you want in the most efficient way.
 - Technique is fluid depending on context
 - Groundedness
 - Pelvic mobility
 - Articulation of limbs and feet
 - Polycentric movement
 - Moving through line
 - Energy over shape
 - This is accomplished through dropping weight through heels and allowing the hips to open – finding comfortable rotation that is supportive rather than forced.

Axial Coding

The next layer of coding, axial coding, required me to take a closer look at the main ideas and subcategories to determine if there were direct relationships between the actual responses and the highlighted material from open coding. Using the same example from Ms. Young's response to defining technique, axial coding exposes that she believes that technique is a **skill set** utilized with **efficiency**. She emphasizes and prioritizes a **grounded** posture while training dancers, and because efficiency is her understanding of technique, she intentionally uses specific exercises in class to find a "comfortable rotation" for

students. Axial coded data from the master instructor interviews, student Canvas survey and free write journals are summarized and elaborated upon in Chapter IV.

Steps Toward Evaluation

Evaluating the coded material in conjunction with my personal reflections on teaching the course uncovered the vital tools to underscore the three avenues of focus for jazz dance class in the academy. Differences and new topics revealed between the investigative tools of this experiment comment on the shifts in teaching jazz dance from the past, and also on the options jazz dance practitioners and educators have for the future. For more on the results of the study, please refer to Chapter IV of this thesis.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION

4.1. Master Interviews and Developing Course

The master interview questions were designed to explore the three avenues of inquiry, so from the beginning, the questions were designed to expose answers directly related to a main idea. This was because I was interested in specific topics, and hoped to create an interview instrument that would give me the valuable information that would directly relate to the three avenues of research: the role of music and its effect in the studio; core movement and conceptual elements that define a jazz dance class; and historical foundations.

The beginning interview questions #1-3 were designed to introduce key concepts and the final questions #19-20 elicited the opinions of each individual regarding the future of jazz dance. I chose not to include these specific questions in this write-up because they were created for a purpose other than the three avenues of research. These questions were introductory and conclusive in nature to assist with the flow of the interview. The topic of creativity and improvisation are very important to my research, but in my opinion, fall just outside of the three avenues of research that I initially addressed. Therefore, questions 14-15 that focus on creativity in the classroom specifically addressing improvisation are analyzed and addressed in Chapter V. The importance of improvisation and creativity in class became clear over the course of 10 weeks in a topic of great importance when it comes to the context of jazz dance. The questions reviewed below addressed the three avenues of research.

The Role of Music and its Effect in the Studio

One of the largest changes that I made in my lesson plan according this information was in choosing music for the jazz class, in addition to considering the history of jazz music as an aid to understanding the history of jazz dance. It was apparent through interview questions #4-8 that each master instructor prioritized music and musical concepts in class to help students understand the essence of jazz dance.

Question #4: What role does music play in your class?

All of the instructors made reference to music being a focal point or the main, driving element of their class. I would even argue that their classes would not be as functional without musical primacy, whether recorded, live, or in Mr. Siegenfeld's case sometimes, produced by the body itself. I prefaced the class that I taught with this concept to help students understand that our bodies are not moving separately from the music, but within, around and even, against the music. Following in the footsteps of the master instructors, the entirety of my course was designed around music, particularly according to a jazz music history timeline (Early 1900s – 1980s “pop” jazz. Perhaps more important than following this timeline, concepts like syncopation, swing, accenting, phrasing and rhythmic play were addressed through warmup, improvisational moments and of course, the choreography I developed for combinations or routines that I taught to students in an effort to challenge them in these specific areas. These particular musical concepts were included in my class because the master instructors emphasized all of these concepts or multiple ones.

Question 5: What type of music do you use in your class?

Swing Music, or music with “swing” is the common denominator amongst all four master instructors. Based on this information and reflecting on music that I heard at the summer conference, I included time-period appropriate, historically accurate music throughout the course. For example, when going through the 1930s and 1940s segment during weeks 1-3, I searched and played music of the swing orchestras that often played at the Savoy Ballroom: Cab Calloway, Count Basie, Duke Ellington and Chick Webb. Swing was an important element not just for historical purposes, but to aid in rhythmic understanding and to enhance the relationship the dancing body shares with rhythmic exploration. Mr. Siegenfeld eloquently articulated this during his interview, “So, that releases them to the two ways of dancing qualitatively to rhythm. And I should say that basically my approach is rhythm-dynamical (rhythm dynamic), one can’t actually happen without the other.”

Cathy Young and Danny Burasczeski both use Blues, “Bluesy” and World Music in their classes, and that is something that I did not do. Some of my song choices like “I Feel So Smoochie” performed by Lena Horne and “I Just Wanna Make Love to You” performed by Aretha Franklin sounds “Bluesy,” but I didn’t specifically do a Blues segment of class to highlight Blues artists. This decision was also made considering the scope of jazz music, not necessarily, the genres that emerged out of jazz, like Blues and Funk. It was really important to me during this particular test course to introduce students to as much jazz music as I could, because I felt that it was unfamiliar territory to most. Three instructors include Funk in their jazz pedagogy, and obviously enjoy it. Mr. Siegenfeld “Loves Funk, like James Brown-type funk, like all of his spawn and off shoots.”

Interestingly, Ms. Young will only include a pop song in her class, “if there is a Pop song with a great Funk, you know?” I agree that musical genres like Blues and Funk contribute to jazz music and dance, but for the purposes of this study, I chose to strictly stay within the scope of Jazz music. Pop music only directly surfaced in my conversation with Mr. Buraczeski. He noted specific pop artists like Michael Jackson, Prince and Bruno Mars that he likes to play in his classes.

Question 6: How do you teach the music of your movement?

All of the master instructor responses include a reference to sensing audibly, visually or vocally when it comes to teaching the music of their movement. The results show that in order to truly understand their movement material, a sensible understanding of the music or rhythm must be accomplished first. Vocalizations were mentioned by Mr. Siegenfeld, Ms. Young and Mr. Buraczeski when asked this specific question, and Ms. Hubbard made reference to “scatting” as well.

I did not include a focus on vocalizations/scatting while teaching my class. I included them as a teaching tool, as that is often how I “count” the music of my movement, or how I deliver material to students. However, I did not have a special focus on vocalizations as a part of student activities. I produce and teach with vocalizations and scatting, more than I do counting, but the students were not asked to perform similar vocalizing.

Question 7: What are key musical concepts?

Musical concepts and terms [in bold] like **syncopation**, **swing** and **rhythm** were used in context by all the master instructors. Billy Siegenfeld classified his focused musical concepts as what he terms to be “**dynamic markings**,” specifically highlighting *staccato*

movement and *sforzando* movement. Ms. Hubbard clarifies the meaning of **syncopation** with her statement about “depicting the difference between **syncopation** and **synchronization**.” Notably, she was also the only instructor to include **call and response** as a focused musical element of class material. Ms. Young referenced musical terms like **melody** and **counterpoint** and so did Mr. Buraczeski when he stated the complexity of **swing**.

The detailed responses to this question inspired me to clarify what musical concepts are important in a jazz class, and to be specific about them in the way I prepared my class material and exercises. Understanding musical concepts and their function within a dance setting would assist with my students’ training in musical dancing; bringing them one step closer to understanding the ineffable essence of jazz. I was able to put Mr. Siegenfeld’s “dynamic markings,” or accents, into practice by utilizing an improvisational exercise that Melanie George shared during her class at the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference. This exercise highlighted *staccato* versus *sforzando* (according to Mr. Siegenfeld’s use of the term) movement of the arms and accenting different counts in the music. This activity occurs during warmup, and students use their upper body to accent certain counts that I call out in the music. Then, I switch the number of the count, to speed up, slow down, or complicate the rhythmic pattern. For example, students might be moving/walking in space and asked to accent the count of 8, and melt out of it until the next 8 appeared. I would add in counts 3 and 7 in addition to the 8 to complicate the rhythmic pattern and challenge the students to accent accordingly.

I also included accenting and encouraged student creativity by choreographing a small phrase to Dave Brubeck’s iconic “Take 5” and asked the students to work in pairs to

replace my accents by creating new **accents** in each 5-count bar throughout. The choreography didn't change, but their movement quality was affected by this exploration. **Syncopation** and **rhythm** education went hand in hand often during my own class using improvisational prompts and across the floor patterns. Teaching the "Shim Sham" during the first three weeks of the term illustrated **syncopation** and rhythmic attention, and demonstrated the difference between **syncopation** and **synchronization**, as Ms. Hubbard suggests. This was one of my most informative questions as it elicited direct and clear answers from the master instructors. At the core of my research, these details were needed for me to build a course that would help students understand the rigor behind understanding the relationship between jazz music and dance. To further the inquiry, I was interested in hearing about their opinions on the effectiveness of their musical choices in class.

Question 8: In your experience, what kinds of music are most effective?

Responses were not unanimous and each master instructor had a different approach to this question. For Ms. Hubbard, effectiveness is dependent on the context of her class week-to-week, and the historical foundation of her class determines the style of dance matching the style of the music (i.e., "Charleston"). Ms. Young named certain artists that she has found success in using during her classes, while Mr. Siegenfeld and Mr. Buraczski delivered relatively vague responses to the question. Inspired by their answers, I felt encouraged to include a wide range of music in my class development, but stayed authentic to the social timeline and jazz dance branch that I was investigating and exploring.

Movement and Conceptual Elements Necessary

Interview questions 9-13 were asked to gain insight on what core movement and conceptual elements are necessary in a jazz dance classroom, i.e., definitive concepts. I

was hoping to uncover if movement and conceptual elements are separated in class, or if they are all bundled together and labeled “technique.” These set of questions were also asked to uncover the many ways of perceiving, practicing and defining “technique.”

Question 9: How do you define technique?

When asked this question, all of the master instructors delivered their personal definition of technique, and followed up with elaborating on their statement. Based on their answers, **restrictions**, **codified**, and **skill set** are terms that I find related. Based on their answers, “technique” to at three of the educators, could be a term outside the practicing of jazz dance; technique being more conceptual than the kinesthetic understanding of technique (i.e., grounded nature vs. demi or grand pli  .)

Ms. Young was the only instructor to mention the “fluidity” in defining technique, even though Mr. Seigenfeld and Mr. Buraczeski’s broad definitions could fall under this “fluid” umbrella concept of technique as well. Specifically, Ms. Young said, “I think the word technique is used as an umbrella to mean classical ballet technique, which is one of many, many techniques.” The interview question was not centered on a specific dance idiom, but Mr. Buraczeski was the only instructor that directly connected it to jazz dance.

During my class, it was important to me not to even mention the word “technique.” If I did mention it, I highlighted its fluid nature similarly to Ms. Young’s interpretation. I replaced “technique” with words and phrases like the following:

- “in the **spirit** of jazz dance we need to move dynamically”
- “**honoring** the **roots**, we keep our grounded posture”
- “Lines were **aesthetically** important during this time in jazz history”
- “this exercise is meant to **build** on your **rhythmic understanding skills**”

- “because **individual expression** is at the **heart of jazz**, it is ok to look differently than the person standing next to you”

After the interviewees eloquently articulating their views on technique, I was very interested in knowing core movements that appear in their classes regularly.

Question 10: What core movements are found in a class?

Like question 9, the answers to this question varied per master instructor. Mr. Siegenfeld’s Jump Rhythm® Technique requires what he identifies **scapular abduction** and **flick kicks**, to “introduce the idea of **sidedness**,” meaning the movement range and efficiency of the sides of the body. Ms. Hubbard introduced core movements for her classes through a description of the **lowered and grounded body aesthetic** and specific exercises like **stylized walks** and **body articulation**. Ms. Young’s description of her warm up, which had a special focus on the **spine** and **breathing**, answered the question thoroughly. Mr. Buraczski, delivered snippets of exercises like isolations across the floor, roll downs and pliés that he presents throughout his class, from beginning to end – a familiar model to many for introducing phrase movement in technique class.

In my designed class, I incorporated and explored several of the ideas proffered in the interviews: the idea of **stylized walks** that Ms. Hubbard includes, especially in the early/authentic jazz sequence of class that was done weeks 1-3. A lot of these walks were explored by students in the improvisational group warmup, and acted as a transition into the next warmup movement or step. I also incorporated **pliés** in a balletic formal style, i.e., with turned out rotation; but also in a non-traditional way with a focus on buoyancy and grounding within it, usually in parallel. Similar to the flicks and kicks that Mr. Siegenfeld

referenced, I utilized these gestures to accent movement and music in choreography and across the floor patterns.

I did not approach the class from a somatic lens in a way that Cathy Young illustrated. I believe that this decision was fueled once again by personal preference as I don't see jazz dance through the somatic lens, and specifically wasn't trained this way. Somatic work can be present in jazz dance education thanks to the work of Lynn Simonson and other artists like Ms. Young, but I don't connect with jazz through a somatic lens at this point. My teaching objectives did involve the body and an awareness for it, but more through the instruction of rhythmic play and improvisation. I also did not explore isolations across the floor inspired by Mr. Buraczeski. Melanie George explored this concept in center floor work at the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference. I didn't feel that isolation work was necessary for the first two combinations I taught in this class. Rhythmic understanding took precedence over isolations during the early jazz section and the musical theatre section. I did have isolated movement in the "Control" phrase (the 1970s and 1980s segment), but I chose to prepare for those by utilizing my past warmup isolation sequence that warms one body part at a time – moving from the head, to the feet in a stationary position.

Question 11: What core movement concepts are a part of a class? Do you separate core jazz movements from core jazz concepts?

From my analysis, it is clear, that Ms. Hubbard does not separate core movements from core concepts in jazz. They are fused together for her and for her students. She used the "Big Apple" as an example and stated that it, "is a composite of vocabulary in a circle." So, for Ms. Hubbard, the movements are the concepts and vice versa. However, the remaining three instructors did not deliver a solid answer, especially when it comes to the idea of separating core movements from core concepts. Mr. Buraczeski stated that "broken

lines” were a core concept of focus in his class, but also concluded that it could be a core movement. In Mr. Siegenfeld’s Standing Down Straight® method, he articulated his technique to be a “core alignment concept” in which the Standing Down Straight® posture “dictates” movement. Ms. Young was the only one whose answer uncovered that, based on my analysis, doesn’t necessarily separate core movements from core concepts, but rather categorizes and subcategories them. For example, she revealed that she teaches swing and pulse (main categories). So, to emphasize these concepts, her movement lessons contain momentum to address swing and using the head, back and sternum to bring clarity to pulse (subcategories). Although she never states that she sees movement and conceptual elements as one entity in her classes, based on the way she articulates her answer, it is apparent that she doesn’t completely separate them either.

Question 12: What is the function of a warm up?

Although the master instructors’ answers to this question seem different, their descriptive language uncovers that all of their warmups are done with the intention of “shifting” to a different way of being. This is apparent in Mr. Siegenfeld’s warm up - to shift into using the “least amount of energy to produce the most amount of power.” To prepare for Ms. Hubbard’s class, vocabulary must be learned, and it is incorporated into the warmup, exchanging with the musician simultaneously. The vocabulary that Ms. Hubbard refers to are movements like stylized walks. Ms. Young and Mr. Buraczeski both make references to the health and well-being of the body in its preparation for movement. Ms. Young was as equally articulate explaining her warmup, similarly to Ms. Hubbard, by elaborating her use of different “series” she includes. She mentions a “spine series, breathing series, swing series, battement series” etc. All of these series are executed with

the intention of waking up the body and "creating ownership" for students within a warmup.

Warmups were constantly being shifted in my class due to the movement material following a historical timeline. The early jazz segment warmups were mostly improvisational with stylized walks (inspired by Ms. Hubbard) being the featured component. Most of the focus was rhythm and efficiency rather than attending to muscular end-gain stretching. However, as the timeline progressed (like the evolution of jazz dance itself) my warm ups began to fuse with ballet terminology and exercises like pliés and relevés. By the conclusion of the course set in contemporary jazz movement, we were doing warmups that focused less and less on rhythmic articulation and more and more on body stretching and strengthening.

Question 13: Do you use across the floor patterns? If yes, how do you conduct them?

All master instructors utilize across the floor in their classes and they conduct them in the traditional manner; linear going from one side of the room to another, in lines of 4-5. Ms. Hubbard and Mr. Buraczeski both made a reference to utilizing across the floor as a preparatory tool for the final combination or "routine" that is taught near the end of class. Ms. Young challenges the traditional format of across the floor by playing with the dancers' arrangements in space, resulting in an automatic connection between dancers moving across the floor.

I utilized across the floor in the same traditional format to emphasize rhythm, syncopation and assertive movement that I believe is important in a jazz dance class. Very rarely did my across the floor patterns focus on classroom community or creative movement exploration. This decision was based on the skill set of the students that signed

up for the class. I chose to focus on subjects during the across the floor phrases that addressed their weaknesses – which happened to be rhythmic understanding and articulation.

Question 16: Do you integrate other styles of dance into your jazz class?

Ms. Hubbard was the only instructor that stated she does not include other styles in her “vintage” jazz class, especially ballet terminology. Although, when she teaches “contemporary jazz dance” she admitted that she does incorporate other styles (without elaborating on what those styles were). The remaining three educators agreed that they do incorporate other styles into their jazz dance classes. Mr. Siegenfeld stated that he incorporates “basic human movement” that is inspired and worked in with acting and music education as well. Mr. Buraczeski claims to incorporate other styles into his class, but makes an effort to exclude ballet vocabulary. He feels that jazz dance has its own vernacular vocabulary. For example, he uses the word “leap” instead of “jeté.” Ms. Young felt that this question was “loaded,” and proceeded to dig into her own training history to expose her understanding and dedicated development of her jazz class. She mentioned inspirations of modern, postmodern and contact improvisation filtering into her classes, as well as including knowledge that helped her develop “anatomically sound” ways of moving.

One style that I included for the first time in this jazz class was tap dance. This was apparent when we learned the “Shim Sham” and looked at Testa’s Tree to see how related tap dance was to jazz dance. I also included ballet, especially in the 1970s and 1980s classic studio jazz segment.

Historical Foundations

Interview questions 17-18 address the use of history in the master instructors' teaching methods. While all of the avenues of research were of interest to me, this avenue made the most impact on my teaching philosophy and method; not only for me, but for my students. More on this impact will be discussed in Chapter V. The purpose of these questions was to discover how each master instructor approaches the inclusion of history in the jazz dance class.

Question 17: How do you approach jazz dance history in your class?

All of the master instructors heavily lean on their musical choices in the classroom to incorporate jazz dance history. For Mr. Buraczeski, the interview exposes that his musical choices are the driving forces behind his inclusion of historical knowledge. Throughout his interview, he emphasized that he familiarizes himself with his music and often would educate the students on the particular singer and band member through articles, videos, etc. Ms. Hubbard's course is often titled "Authentic Jazz" or "Vintage Jazz" – her entire approach is historical, and extremely valuable to students as she is a first-hand resource of the history she is teaching. Ms. Young references musicians as well, and how this focus uncovers what was happening in society in a certain place and time. She also alluded to referencing specific historical jazz dancers or jazz dance teachers by stating, "I think it is really important reference where something is coming from. If it is not mine, you know?" Mr. Siegenfeld utilizes videos and his own course creation entitled, "American Rhythm Dancing" that highlights African American originated singing and dancing of the 20th century.

A historical timeline became the backbone of my entire course. I began in the early 1900s, highlighting early jazz dancing like Swing Era social dancing and moved into the 1950s Bebop Era which changed jazz dance and music entirely. Spending some time understanding Bebop and Cool Jazz, we also went into the 1950s and 1960s musical theatre, to demonstrate how jazz dance was the main dance idiom that brought entertainment success to Broadway. From there, we moved into the 1970s and 1980s and went into more “classic” jazz dance that fully incorporated ballet terminology and made popular by movies like *Flashdance*.

Question 18: How does this historical knowledge effect class experience for a student?

Examples?

Two specific words emerged from the answers of all four educators: context and connection. In some way, I see these words as nearly synonymous, certainly related. But it appears each educator has experienced their students understanding a context in jazz dance through historical knowledge, helping them understand where they fit into all of this, and how it is all connected. Ms. Hubbard gave a direct example of students connecting some of the movements learned in her jazz class to current hip hop movements. Both Mr. Siegenfeld and Ms. Young spoke to the humanity of jazz dance that I advocated for in Chapter II of this research, and continue to elaborate on in the conclusion of this project. Mr. Siegenfeld said that history allows for students to see, “Brilliant examples of, people dancing verses dancer dancing” and Ms. Young believes that history, “helps them to feel that there is integrity to what they are doing.”

The next section of analysis is dedicated to the participant responses from a guided weekly questionnaire that was delivered throughout the duration of the 10-week course.

Those results uncovered what resonated from the development of the course, considering all of the information analyzed in this section of the master instructor interviews, in addition to my own personal preferences and decisions. I hope the reader will find the results to be as informative and exciting as I do.

4.2. Participant Electronic Questionnaire Analysis

It was crucial that I find a way to get participant feedback within the IRB guidelines of anonymity. I wanted to give participants the freedom to write about their experience, but I also wanted to find answers that were directly related to the three avenues that I built my thesis around. To facilitate this process, I created two writing vehicles for participants to give feedback; (1) anonymous free-write (non-prompted) handwritten journals and (2) a weekly questionnaire that was displayed on the class's online campus course system and to be recorded electronically by the participant. The results and further details on the anonymous free-write journals are covered in part C of this chapter. In this section, I will report the findings of the coded analysis in the electronic participant questionnaire responses, and interpret selected results that were significant to the study in Chapter V.

The ten questions that were developed specifically for this questionnaire mirrored questions from the master instructor interview. I did this because I felt it would produce a qualitative comparison of information to the master instructor interview results; and also to expose the effect of implementing ideas on the three avenues gleaned from other parts of my research. One question was released online per week for the participants to answer. This was my method of choice because I wanted to ensure that participants were answering questions in a progressive way, instead of running the risk that they might answer all the questions at the end of the course. Those results would have been valuable in other ways

perhaps, but I was trying to find a way to demonstrate their transformative learning (or lack thereof) in writing. For this study, I acquired four anonymous participants. Only three out of the four participants opted to answer the online questions each week to compile a term-long electronic journal. I labeled participants Green, Yellow and Red. Not all of the participants answered every question (particularly Red), but I was able to pull fruitful information from the responses nonetheless.

Clarifying an Understanding of Jazz

I wanted the first and final question of the questionnaire to be the same, in hopes to qualitatively analyze any changes that may have occurred in the learning process throughout the term. This question was generic in nature, and purposefully cultivated to encourage the participants to include a reflection of their own training in this answer, honoring the vernacular aspect of jazz. This type of question would also generate a lens for me to see how the participants “like their art” – I simply just worded this valuable question differently. This kind of reflective information would allow the flexible lesson plan to bend per the needs of the participants.

Week 1: How would you describe a jazz class to someone who has never taken a jazz class?

Two out of the three participants generated answers that included **rhythm** or a **rhythmic understanding** of jazz dance. Green and Red mentioned **technique** and alluded to either specific movements to define technique, or to **ballet** foundations in general. Already during week 1, the participants understood the complexity of defining jazz and exposed that there are many, simultaneous answers to the question.

The Role of Music and its Effect in the Studio

Similar to questions 4-8 in the master instructor interviews, I was interested in gearing the next questions towards the musical avenue of research. I condensed these questions down from four to two because I only wanted to give participants one question per week. I replicated the question of music and its role in class, but took the question from the master instructor interviews regarding music and its effect and re-worded it more directly for the participants. These questions were asked with the intention of knowing how participants were experiencing and understanding the music/movement relationship during this 10 week course.

Week 2: What role does music play in this class?

At this point in the course, we were listening to early jazz from the 1930s from artists like Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington and Fats Waller, etc. Two participants viewed the music used in class as an aid in understanding the history of jazz. Green elicited that music challenges rhythmic understanding and play, in keeping with her answer from week one. Yellow's answer is difficult to interpret, but I believe that her relation of "coordination with the feet" with the role of music in class actually means rhythmic play, in a similar fashion that Green described it. I feel this way because in class, jazz movement and improvisation is often articulated with footwork, so coordination of the feet isn't supported by the music - the rhythmic play of the feet is *challenged* by the music.

For example, their typical warm up during the early jazz segment would often be stylized walks traveling in a circle and students being prompted to syncopate the walks differently. This also occurred when we learned "Pickin' Cherries" (both in warm up and across the floor) and students were asked to pick their cherries rhythmically different every

time. Red however, directly associated music with historical knowledge and “setting class tone.” She claimed that it not only exposed what era in history we were covering, but how historical knowledge also informed the movement that was to be performed or executed during class.

Week 3: What type of music or particular song has been your favorite so far? Why?

Participants had opposite responses to their favorite music played so far in class. Green enjoyed “Salt Peanuts” which I played to demonstrate how the development of the Bebop sound changed dancing to jazz music in the 1950s in addition to the Latin Jazz that was being fused around the same time. On the other end of the spectrum, it appears Red enjoyed more of the Cool Jazz sounds of Miles Davis and Hard Bop sounds of Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers.

Core Movement and Conceptual Elements Found in a Jazz Dance Class

With most contemporary jazz dance being shape and shaping oriented, and the lessons learned thus far in class, I had to inquire about the participants’ view of technique. Much like the master instructors, the participant responses also elicit rigor behind answering tough questions about technique. As these young women are in flux with their own identities as humans and their place in this world, it bleeds through their responses; reconsidering the popular consensus of what technique actually is, challenging the norm in addition to what they’ve been told versus what they have experienced.

Week 4: What is “technique?”

Green and Yellow had very similar answers that brought out the words “look” and “movement(s) executed.” This shows that both participants interpret technique as a physical concept. However, they both also mentioned that there were internally-driven

forces within technique, leading dancers to rely on their *feelings* to accomplish a technical task. Red had a very different interpretation of technique, highlighting its ability to “change based on the genre of dance”; excitingly identical to Ms. Young’s approach to defining technique! Reflecting on the master instructor interview analysis from section 4.1., Ms. Young stated that the, “definition of technique has to be fluid depending upon what kind of dancing you are talking about.” Overall, the participants understood technique to have physical, emotionally charged and fluid qualities; which underscores the totality of jazz dance as a specific cultural expression. Deeper interpretation of these results will be discussed in Chapter V.

Week 5: According to your knowledge and training, name three of the most important movements in jazz dance. In your opinion, why are they the most important?

Green chose to write out specific movements like ball change, body isolations and chassés. Red decided to write about more generic concepts that are considered most important in the context of a jazz dance class, like syncopating rhythms and embodiment. Through the specific steps that Green lists, the definition of technique that this participant articulated the question before is transparent. Green holds value in weight shifts, rhythmic shifts/accents and the “cool” aesthetic – these are most important to her. Red listed items that she/he felt were more stylistically related.

Week 6: How would you describe the use of improvisation in this class?

Both Yellow and Green articulated that the use of improvisation in the class acted as a tool to aid in movement execution/decisions. Green elaborated on the use of improvisation in class by expanding her/his answer to include rhythmic focus, connection to other dancers and personal style. Improvisations almost exclusively occurred in the beginning of class acting as the warm up itself, or a more structured activity after warm up

led by me. Sometimes the explorations were done individually, partnered or as the entire group. A better analysis of improvisation and its effect is uncovered by way of the handwritten journal responses from the participants in section 4.3.

Week 7: Before this class, has jazz dance history ever been discussed in your dance training? If so, when and how?

The participants in this study never received education regarding jazz dance history before this class. This question was drawn from a quite personal place, as I too never received historical jazz dance education prior to attending Graduate School. I was genuinely curious to know if the participants shared my same experience.

Week 8: When do you feel most creative in this class?

Participants identified moments of personal creativity during the improvisation segments and when rhythm was structurally or improvisationally explored. Students often warmed up in a circle, taking turns with changing movement for the rest of the group to follow along. Sometimes, students were given a separate improvisational activity – usually with a partner. During week 8 students began gathering into groups and choreographing their final movement projects, one opportunity that offered creativity to students. Yellow found creativity through the choreographic project.

Historical Foundations in Jazz Dance

This question was assimilated to generate the information I was initially seeking during question 18 of the master instructor interviews (How does historical knowledge affect class experience for a student? Examples?). I wanted more concrete examples coming from the participant's perspective on how historical knowledge impacted or didn't impact their jazz dance experience. My perception of historical knowledge's impact will be fully elaborated in Chapter V.

Week 9: With an understanding of jazz dance history, has your movement experience changed? Why or why not?

Participant answers presented an "investigative" tone; historical understanding generated "curiosity" and "depth" to their jazz dance practice. This was crucially important to my values and goals in the class that I designed. Around this time in the term, we had many discussions and inquiry on topics ranging from ballet/jazz fusion to race in American jazz dance. Ultimately, I wanted my students to leave the course with more questions than answers; encouraging them to continue the artistic excavation.

Even though it was not outwardly stated, Yellow's comment alludes a similarity with context, "I understand more of the history behind what I am doing." Without using the word "context," Yellow found a way to connect her current movement to the past, allowing her to "recognize more **depth**" in her movements.

Week 10: How would you describe a jazz dance class to someone who has never taken a jazz class?

As stated before, I chose to ask the participants the same question that was posed to them in week one, to identify if the course material that was explored throughout 10 weeks would impact they're answer. Green's response in week 10 was similar to the response she gave in week 1. Week 10's response generates a broader tone, but includes other specifics like the "cool" aesthetic, African dance and syncopation that were absent from Week One. Yellow also delivered a more generic answer to the question during week 10 in comparison to week 1. In week 1, Yellow described jazz with a rhythmic emphasis, and in week 10, jazz dance class is described as a, "fun and energetic form of dance, with less strict structure than ballet but more technique-based than hip hop."

Summary

Organizing a set of prompted questions for the participants proved helpful to my research. In some instances I was able to connect their reactions and writing to my review of literature in addition to the responses from the master instructor interviews. If any changes were to be made, it would be to ask the participants more questions in a similar format as the master instructor interviews. This would have provided me with more data to analyze and compare. Overall, I believe that this information is not only revealing of the study, but informative on how to proceed for future classes. The next section of analysis will display the main ideas uncovered from the hand-written unprompted journals that the participants kept throughout the term. The reader will be enlightened to find similar discoveries found in this section, and new ones that reveal how jazz dance is reflective of the practitioner itself.

4.3. Participant Journal Analysis

To enhance my qualitative study, I wanted to offer participants a way to reflect without a prompt generated by me. Participants were asked to keep a journal of hand written entries, one entry per week. I had no idea what kinds of information I would receive from the free write journals and if the information between participants would be connected or completely unrelated. These kinds of personal journals can be very revealing and informative for the instructor and the participants themselves. This information greatly adds to the qualitative mode of research that I underwent as it presents information as descriptors to the weekly material executed throughout the term, in addition to the subjective material naturally found in these types of data collections. As the reader will notice, some information surfaced in this section is mirrored from the analysis done in

section 4.2. But I find the tone of these paralleled ideas to be the factor that differentiates these responses from the prompted ones. What is most important about this information is that the topics that the participants wrote about made the most impact on their experience, because it was a free-write, no prompt journal entry. I took this information very seriously as the following information held the most weight among the participants and their experience over the 10-week course.

Organization

This section is organized by week according to my segmented lesson plans, but I will be highlighting specific information labeled “Avenues Impacted.” The bullets listed under this categories represent my “take aways” from the journals as a whole. Consideration of my three main avenues of research will be prioritized in these bullet points as well, when applicable. If there are other pieces of information that surface throughout each week, I will note that as well and deliver its larger meaning in Chapter V.

Student identification was anonymous due to the nature of the study and I continue labeling participants as colors in this section. Please note that the participants in this section are labeled different colors than the analysis done in section 4.2. This is because I have no way of knowing which hand written journals belong to matching participant electronic journals. A total of four participants turned in hand written journals. It is important to note however, participant Blue partially completed the journal, only submitting about 3-4 weeks of entries. This did effect the data collection, and will be discussed further in Chapter V.

Week by Week Analysis

Week 1: Introductions to Jazz III with Lindsey Salfran – Early Jazz Swing Segment

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Historical foundations
- Inquiry of past training

During week one, the responses showed that participants were most moved by introduction of jazz dance history, particularly African dance for participant Blue. Two of the four participants admitted to not having previous knowledge of jazz dance history, and two out of the four also reviewed their expectations entering the course.

Week 2: Early Jazz Swing Segment Continued

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- The value of improvisation
- Historical foundations – connection between tap and jazz

By week 2, students were participating in a warm up that was a fully structured improvisation. Students were the creators and facilitators that made decisions, which was intended to help them explore individual expression within a community, explore movement vocabulary (specifically of the 1930s), investigate style, and to create autonomy and community simultaneously. Three participants chose to write about this improvisation and its impact on them. They expressed that they were not expecting so much improvisation, but found value in practicing it, even if it took them out of their comfort zone. Purple reflected, “The improvisation exercises continue to be valuable for me and – it seems – for my classmates, since they challenge us to not only find our own personal style and expression within the movement, but also to take a more active role in the class.” Orange mentioned, “I have done activities like that before but never so stylized.”

Pink’s most memorable experience from week two was connecting the Shim Sham back to her tap training roots. She also found a way to take this historical dance and connect

it to her present understanding of folklore. “I am realizing now that the Shim Sham is a folklore artifact that has always been in my life. I never realized it until now.”

Week 3: Early Jazz Swing Segment Continued

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Role of Music and Rhythmically Complex footwork – The Shim Sham
- The importance of improvisation (partnered)
- The significance of the circle

By the end of week 3, the class was finishing up the “early jazz” segment. We were putting the final touches on the “Shim Sham” and switching from Big Band Swing to the introduction of 1940s and 1950s Bebop and the development of Cool Jazz and Hard Bop. Two of the participants expressed the appeal of the complicated footwork – according to the week’s material, they are specifically talking about the “Shim Sham.”

Purple expressed interest in the partner improvisation that I facilitated and layered with structure. The exercise required one partner to be low and the other high, they must be connected by touch in some way and simultaneously make it a rhythmic exploration with this other person.

Blue further commented on her preference to warming up in a circle versus the more traditional linear format. She stated, “Warming up in a line feels like dance class, but warming up in a circle feels like warming up the atmosphere.”

Week 4: 1940s Bebop, Hard Bob, Cool Jazz and Musical Theatre

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Role of music in the studio and its effect
- The value of rhythmic challenges found in jazz music

- Syncopation

During week 4, we transitioned into 1940s and 1950s jazz with dancing to music from The Modern Jazz Quartet, Clifford Brown and Max Roach and Tito Puente. I added in a pli  sequence, but found it very satisfying to watch the students release the balletic tendencies of the form that produces a stacked body posture and focus on grounded-ness and buoyancy. I also incorporated my favorite “flying and falling” exercise, and focused on the what it means to “hinge” in the classic jazz aesthetic in addition to challenging balance and weight exchange. This was also the week that I incorporated “scootches,” kick-ball-changes and drags into the brisk across-the-floor patterns to “Moanin’” by Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Orange and Purple alluded to the difficulty with this across the floor pattern. Students had a difficult time not with the steps themselves, but how they were arranged musically; syncopating movement was a challenge.

The first pass across the floor (with the movements mentioned above), it appeared to me that the students were still bodily searching for a 4/4 pulse, and it prevented them from hearing and embodying any kind of syncopation. Before the second side, I repeated the counts with elaborated vocalizations that paralleled how their bodies should be reacting and performing the movement according to the chosen syncopation. As stated in Chapter VI-B, improvement was made the second pass across the floor attempting to find ease in syncopation, but it was apparent that the students were still needing work. The “Aesthetic of the Cool” by Robert Farris Thompson surfaced in their homework for the week and how it related to the concepts I was trying to teach in this particular across the floor segment. Not only is articulating the rhythm important, but the quality, specifically the easeful/cool quality, at which you do so holds equal value in the completion of the sequence.

This was also the week we did a snippet combination of Dave Brubeck's "Take 5," challenging the students to dance with an odd meter. In addition to that, I expanded the assignment by asking them to work in pairs to find new accents among the existing choreography. Purple commented on this particular assignment; how it encouraged them to think "outside the "four on the floor" beat of many pop songs, using syncopation and other time signatures that require us to pay close attention to the music."

Week 5: 1940s Bebop, Hard Bob, Cool Jazz and Musical Theatre Continued

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Historical Context – Musical Theatre and Early Jazz
- Appropriation in Jazz

Week 5 was the beginning of the musical theatre segment, as it is a part of the jazz conversation, and a branch in Testa's Tree. This portion of the course brought up different results from the participants. I think that being week 5 and pressure coming into their lives from outside of our classroom contributed to this mash up of responses in addition to being at a place in the term where they must really stand back and reflect on the information they've been given thus far. Pink was still effected by the rhythmic challenges presented in class – the "Take 5" assignment described in the prompt above would be an example of this. Orange expressed her love for musical theatre and really arched the information back to the early/vintage jazz dancing that we were doing at the beginning of the term.

Purple brought up many topics in one answer during this section. She described an appreciation for musical knowledge in addition to the movement delivery. Similar to Orange's statement of understanding how connected often separated jazz styles are, Purple also highlighted a personal general connection made during week 5. She stated that jazz

dance can have multi-definitions, and how it is impossible to define it one way. Purple also commented on the appropriation discussion that we had in class.

Week 6: Dialogue in Jazz and Musical Theatre Continued

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Distaste for Dialoguing Improvisation exercise

It was unanimous among participants that the improvisation exercise presented in class was challenging, uncomfortable and undesirable. The topic was dialoguing – something that’s important in dance...especially jazz dance. I asked the students to find a partner and explain what they had for breakfast to them. They had to do this without words, standing back to back. And the other partner had to guess what their friend had for breakfast based off their interaction. A few were actually, able to guess. Then they were asked to utilize call and response methods and dance facing each other expressing how their morning went. Pantomime was the dominant source of movement. I turned off the music and gave them the topic of expressing a hurdle that they are currently trying to jump over in their lives; still more pantomime. Then, I had them pick a topic to call and respond to. They chose what they were for Halloween, and I added to it an element of questioning what they are scared of. Still, pantomime.

When discussing the activity in class with the students, they found difficulty in expressing their prompt to another person. They claimed that if they were given this prompt to interpret for themselves, by themselves, then it would be easier. In the journals, all participants negatively responded with words like, “uncomfortable,” “hard,” “did not like” and “frustrated.” It was quite informative how uncomfortable my students were with

intentional, expressive dialogue. Purple questioned, “how the concept of dialogue plays out when it is brought to the stage and screen.”

Week 7: Controversial Topics in Jazz: Race, Appropriation, Black Face, The 2017 Election Results and Pop Jazz of the 1970s and 1980s

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Political Unrest and Jazz
- Vernacular tendencies of jazz
- Black face and Appropriation

Week 7 was a great example of the flexibility in my lesson plan. This week was altered by societal events happening on campus and nation-wide. We ended up using one entire class to discuss the history behind black face as a result of the UO Law Professor incident that occurred on Halloween. This week Donald Trump was also designated the new President-elect, so emotions ran high. This particular topic ended up in Pink’s weekly writing and Purple also spoke about appreciating our discussions around these tough topics in jazz.

The students’ midterm papers were graded at this point, and I wanted to discuss some topics that emerged out of their writing. Their midterm assignment was to watch a routine labeled “jazz” from the TV show, *So You Think You Can Dance*, and to defend or oppose its labeling as jazz, based on the concepts we’ve discussed in class. Two concepts that were re-addressed and clarified were *swing* and *appropriation vs. influence*. It was great that students included these topics in their papers, but in context, it was clear that they didn’t have a general grasp on it.

We also spoke about the history of black face and minstrelsy as a result of an incident that occurred with a UO Law Professor dressing in black face for Halloween, and

also students appearing in black face on campus right after the election. I could not ignore the social environment that was present on campus that day – I felt that I needed to offer my students a chance of acknowledgment and a place like the studio to express, whatever side of the fence they were on. And based on my participant’s reactions, the essence of jazz dance permeates through their writing.

Week 8: Pop Jazz 1970s and 1980s

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Historical foundations
- Core Movement/Conceptual Elements in Jazz

Moving into contemporary jazz, and learning a combination to “Control” by Janet Jackson, it was clear that a majority of the students were comfortable with the class structure, as well as the movement vocabulary. According to the participants’ answers, what stands out as most profoundly significant is their connection to the past while dancing in the present. All of the participants reflected on their past (whether it was the last 8 weeks, or their life training thus far) and connected it to the now. Orange declared, “I am very appreciative of how this class has been structured. Making connections between past and present and recognizing movements that I’m used to with historical context gives me a whole different perspective on dance.” Purple began to realize upon learning the “Control” combination that, “certain things we had been working on in the past eight weeks still came into play and made the movements more easeful than they might otherwise have been.” She even noted specific movement/conceptual elements (one of my three avenues) that resonated from earlier forms of jazz dance: weight shifts, rhythmic accents, grounded stance and sense of swing.

Pink began to appreciate her past experience with Early Jazz training, because contemporary seemed very “fake.” Orange made connections to the material learned early in the term, but still inquired about ballet’s role in jazz dance, specifically according to the time line of history. Purple connected concepts discussed early in the course, to the contemporary jazz segment in which I used mostly pop songs, with a “four on the floor” rhythm pattern.

Week 9: 1980s Jazz Continued and Final Group Choreographic Projects

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Historical Foundations
- Holistic Training

In preparation for their final choreographic assignment and the ending of the term, participants’ answers were reflective of the term, as a whole. The students’ final choreographic assignment was to create a jazz piece to a pop song currently on the radio – and make it “swing.” The challenge of the assignment is utilizing syncopation within a pop song to make the movement interesting, or appear to *swing*. Purple said, “what jazz really is – specifically, that there is no right answer to this question, but rather multiple ones. After all, jazz is a hybridized dance form, and is constantly changing as the years go by.” Once again, this circles back around to Ms. Young’s “fluid” interpretation of technique!

Another significant comment came from Purple: “I’ve found that everything I learn both in jazz and African dance classes can be applied to both modern and ballet, and has helped me become a more intelligent, versatile, and rhythmically attuned dancer.” Purple outwardly stated that the concepts she’s learned in my jazz class can be applied to other idioms that she studies - this is directly aligned with my intentions as a jazz instructor.

Week 10: Final Choreographic Projects

Avenue(s) Impacted:

- Role of music and sense of play
- Core movement and conceptual elements of jazz
- Historical foundations
- Conclusive thoughts

According to the week 10 journal responses, two out of the three participants were “surprised” how “appealing” it was to watch each other find swing out of material created to a pop song. Pink said, “Counts naturally shifted and accents began to reflect the new song.” This was one of my most successful assignments of the term.

After performing their jazz piece to a pop song of their choice, I would choose a more traditional jazz song and have them dance their choreography to it. This forced them to negotiate their syncopation with a rhythmically more complex song...in the moment. They were not aware of which song I was going to choose for their group.

Group 1 consisted of 5 Dancers and chose to dance to “Side 2 Side” by Ariana Grande. Some of their movement vocabulary included a layout, boogie, repetition and what I would classify as “contemporary jazz technique/tricks.” Syncopation of the music was present, in addition to hip movements, alluding to a sexy/sultry performance.

The song I chose was, “Something’s Got a Hold on Me” by Etta James. The group did a fantastic job attending to their choreography and the rhythm that this new song presented. In the moment, they sped up certain parts, and sustained others to make their choreography work with the music they were given. I could see visually the active listening taking place by their deeply concentrated faces in addition to their awareness of each other

and still trying to dance as a unit. It was quite exciting for me and their classmates to view, and the participants' journal entries solidify this.

Group 2 consisted of 4 dancers (one was ill), and chose to dance to, "All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey. It was clear that the beginning of the piece was improvised. Dancers appeared to almost be doing a version of lyrical dancing, initiated by the melody and lyrics. I was craving a more structured improvisation from the students. Because the music at that certain section was very grandiose and absent of a steady beat, I felt like the students couldn't really improvise, rhythmically. Other movement elements that the students included: Lindy Hop, "Boogie Woogie" with syncopation, "Pickin' Cherries," leaps and pirouettes.

The song that I chose for them to dance to was, "Orange Colored Sky" by Natalie Cole. The improvisational content became more interesting, as it looked as though the dancers had to keep up with the music, rather than having just a few musical markers to refer to. I tried to also consider the tempo of their original song and match it in an abstract way to the song that I chose.

In-Class Student feedback (with the class as a whole):

- The challenge of finding swing in a pop song was harder than the students imagined.
- This assignment forced them to step outside of their comfort zones.
- They questioned if the end result (with my choice of music) was "better" than their original choreographic piece.
- There was a consensus that even though the assignment was challenging, there was in fact, more space to create some interesting syncopated moments in pop music.

With traditional/classic jazz, it is inevitable, but I think using pop music allows students to be even more creative with their rhythmic development.

- The students recognized and expressed that syncopation expands time - meaning, that when they used syncopation in an 8-count bar, they felt like the amount of choreography needed for that 8-count bar expanded. Syncopation has a way of shrinking a movement idea, so more is needed. This was interesting for me to hear them express this concept, because I often feel like syncopation does the opposite, it provides more opportunity for stillness, suspension and a deeper understanding of a single movement versus 5 different ones.
- Students expressed their participation in more active listening when it came to pop music – maybe this was due to their creations of accents and rhythm where the music didn't emphasize it. They had to listen for something that wasn't there – and create it.

Summary

Chapter V will illuminate specific concepts that have been uncovered in the past three sections of analysis. For the purposes of this research, I cannot highlight all of the significant moments of the project, but I can inform the reader of what elements “worked” and “did not work” according to the data. I will further expand on why these results matter to the world at large, and expose some of the greatest lessons I learned throughout the three year process of developing this thesis.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of this research, I am honestly left with more questions than answers. I suppose, this is a good sign for any researcher. Teaching jazz dance in higher education is as complicated as trying to define jazz dance itself. Through this research however, I was able to review, test and uncover some elements of teaching jazz dance that I believe are essential; as well as other elements that are perhaps less effective. I started with three avenues of research and I will conclude with them: the role of music and its effect in the studio; crucial movement and conceptual elements in a jazz dance class; and historical foundations. Using these avenues, I will discuss what was most successful during the experimental course and highlight my reading of deeper meaning. In this chapter, I will also identify unexpected findings and learning opportunities I experienced with course materials that could be modified for future courses. Most importantly, I hope to highlight some final thoughts about this journey, finally advocating for an increasing presence of vernacular art forms.

Role of Music in the Studio and its Effect

What was most profound about this study and this particular avenue of research was the effect music had on the participants during course implementation. More specifically, I was struck by the participants' recognition of jazz dance's musical complexities, including syncopation and accenting. Most students enrolled in my course had private sector/dance competition backgrounds, so truthfully, the mention of rhythm was surprising to me. I understand jazz dance in the private sector lacks a focus on rhythmic training, unless students are required to take tap (most are not). After reading a commentary

they made in response to Testa's Jazz Dance Tree (one of their first assignments), I was excited to adjust class and make the planned material more complex, as they demonstrated some understanding of rhythm's role in jazz.

However, this also informed another question that would have been appropriate to ask, "how do you define rhythm?" I only add this because an intellectual understanding of rhythm might not mean the same as one being able to connect with music in the way jazz dance requires. Sight reading is not the same as improvising or composing on the piano.

Moving away from my comfort zone in using pop music in a jazz class, I discovered that jazz music assists in providing a holistic jazz dance education, i.e., in context. This was apparent in participant responses like, "In this class, the music works to not only influence the quality of our movement (soft vs. sharp, fluid vs. angular, etc....), but also to challenge us with specific rhythmic patterns that may or may not be familiar to us. It acts as a historical learning tool." Participants saw music in this class as a tool that provided historical *context* for movement in addition to a challenge that made them rigorously explore rhythm and syncopation. This was a cross-informative piece of analysis. The feedback suggested that participants understood music to be multifunctional in class, not just background noise, or something to assist in our spiritual connection to the dance. For the participants, it was far deeper than that – including challenging material and a simultaneous history lesson to provide context around their chosen and/or choreographed movements.

Considering Jazz III is an advanced course in the program, I was surprised there were many moments when my students expressed difficulty with learning and practicing the "Shim Sham" in the early jazz segment because of the syncopation that exists, and the

particular accent that falls on the count of 8, rather than 1. During an improvisation in center and then, across-the-floor, in the early jazz segment, students were asked to syncopate the rhythm during “Pickin’ Cherries.” This became difficult for them to improvise and execute when I added the “Boogie” step onto it, beginning with a clap on the count of eight. Simple, across-the-floor exercises that included a “Scootching” movement (referred to as “side drags”) also exposed the difficulty in executing syncopation.

Utilizing Mr. Siegenfeld’s definitions of syncopation, accenting, “dynamic markings” and swing found in his writing was successful with the students. Swing took the longest time for students to grasp, and I am unsure if they acquired a solid, practical definition by the end of the term. However, I believe that this success was measured by the final choreographic project the students accomplished. Reactions in the class and in the journals showed that students found depth (meaning) in their movement within the boundaries of “four on the floor” They were also able to participate in the exciting challenge of a musical shift when I chose a jazz piece for them to dance to in their final choreographic exploration. One student claimed that it was her favorite assignment. I think given more time in a term, the students could have really developed a rich experiment, but it was nonetheless a good start. Switching up the music was the ultimate challenge in my opinion, because it differentiated Jazz III from a Jazz I class. They had the ability to adapt. I’m not sure if this assignment would be as successful with beginning jazz students.

I thought that this was an intelligent way to include pop music in the jazz dance class conversation. As a product of the late 80s and early 90s, my own jazz training was to pop music. I feel moving forward, that if I could somehow learn the essence of jazz dancing

using predominantly pop music in my past, then it should also include a wide variety of jazz music. Responsibly using pop music not only challenges concepts like syncopation, accenting and swing, but it provides students another pathway into connecting their jazz dancing to the contemporary/present vision of jazz dance. I appreciated the wide variety of music that Mr. Buraczeski listed in his interview, specifically including pop examples. There is a significance in pop music and its relationship to jazz dance. If pop music is popular within current society, then it makes sense that it would be included in this vernacular, people-first art form. Including pop music becomes problematic within a jazz dance class because it often lacks the rhythmic complexity of more traditional jazz music. However, reflecting on my training and hearing other master instructors find value in pop music, I believe that there is a way to include a rhythmic play within the “four on the floor” rhythmic fabric or structure so ubiquitous in pop music. What if this experiment was done *only* using pop music? Would participants walk away from the course with similar knowledge according to the three avenues of research? These answers are unknown to me now, but I look forward to experimenting with pop music in jazz dance in the future; finding ways to creatively expose the essence of jazz dance using music that is popular to current generations.

Besides using pop music for a class assignment, I conclude that teaching and organizing the class along a jazz music history timeline was extremely successful. This kind of organization allowed me to easily build the course, introduce students to the music of their movement considering history, and provide more cultural context that could support their movement explorations. The jazz music historical timeline helps to explain *why* jazz dancing has changed over time. More important than providing context, this

course organization allowed students to connect their movements and kinesthetically participate in the development of them from one era to another. For example, the “Lindy Hop” basic step turning into the familiar “Lindy Step” and the “Charleston” transforming into the “Kid-N-Play.” There is evidence of this kinesthetic realization in the week 9 and 10 hand written journal entries from the participants. These entries speak to the idea that the participants see jazz dance as a fluid concept– that you can incorporate older jazz dance vocabulary into contemporary jazz. Even though the music is different today, somehow we can continue to find a way for the essence of jazz to live on through the way we experience jazz. This doesn’t speak to a specific avenue of my research, but it speaks to why I advocate jazz dance as a necessary training method: to train a *whole* dancer. It is one thing to provide a dance education, but including a jazz music timeline provided students with an additional music education; a great example of the power in dual learning.

Music: A Broader View

This research has taught me that musical education in a jazz class is not just crucial but absolutely necessary. It has become impossible for me to teach jazz dance without educating in jazz music. I feel that experimenting with rhythmic statement in performance and pedagogical contexts exposes the fabric of jazz dance: the use of syncopation, treatment of weight and aggressive rhythmic accenting and articulation. How you experiment with this element can vary, but, if it is present, the inevitable surfacing of dynamism will occur as a reflection of the rhythmic play. This exploration of syncopation, rhythm and ultimately, the feeling of swing (another topic in itself) is what makes jazz dance attractive, virtuosic and exciting. Of course, other forms of dance are focused musically. But what differentiates this treatment of rhythm in jazz dance is the presence of

continuous play with rhythm, especially in the form of syncopation. Developing the skill to syncopate as a dancer builds stronger connections to music for the dancer and perhaps more importantly, for the viewer.

Other idioms value a separation of music and dance, and that has proven to also be beautiful art. However, I believe it is crucial for dancers training in any idiom to be well educated in musical treatment: how to both embody rhythm and tamper with it – using syncopation. Teaching jazz dance with an additional focus on music not only helps students become musical and virtuosic dancers – it makes them smart dancers. Musical embodiment becomes a more natural process when jazz dance is taught in this holistic way and students are given tools that can cross idioms throughout their training – contributing to a *versatile* dancer.

Core Movement and Conceptual Elements in Jazz Class

My class was labeled “unorthodox” by a student in her hand-written journal, and throughout the course, the idea of “technique” was continuously challenged. When setting out to explore the “elements” avenue, I hoped I would receive more concrete answers regarding core movements that should be present in a jazz class and an overview of what concepts should be included. In fact, I received the opposite. On my thesis journey, I discovered that teaching jazz class is less about movement(s) and more about concepts that sew together the fabric of jazz dance. Movement is the base of achieving these concepts, but the jazz movement palette has more flexibility than I initially thought. This idea was first exposed in the master instructor interviews, and then also in student feedback. Both underscored the necessity for a “fluid” definition of jazz dance technique. Cathy Young

expressed it during her master instructor interview and a few student responses spoke to the fluidity of technique as well. Post-research, and viewing technique with a more supple understanding, I now realize that movement and conceptual elements in jazz class are not separated in my own teaching philosophy. I feel that they are interchangeable – to teach core movements, core concepts must be taught, and vice versa.

With this beautiful understanding of technique, I can now decipher some important jazz dance elements that are essential for jazz dance classes, especially in higher education. According to my findings, physical “**grounded-ness**” was identified as important by all of the master instructors and was confirmed by the student responses in both journal types when I implemented it in class. The grounded posture and related aesthetic “look” is most definitely an indicator of jazz dance, and it produces dynamic movement; a required portion of the jazz dance vocabulary at large. I emphasized throughout the entire course that to participate in the essence of jazz, the dancer must be grounded. To achieve this, the movements included a tilted torso, weight on the balls of the feet and pelvis down. In writing, they are very separate, but in the practice of jazz dance, it is one concept. This realization also brought me back full circle to the ideas of defining “technique.” Not only does grounded-ness speak to the movement portion of the art form, but also connects to deep African dance roots of jazz dance, making it a part of the diasporic flourishing of African culture.

Another element that surfaced was the importance of **rhythmic articulation** in class. It was important to all the master instructors to build a class environment in which students could rhythmically explore movement and music as one unit. This was often achieved through **improvisation**. I realized something important about improvisation in

the jazz dance context through this research. Improvisation in jazz dance is best not as a supplement to assist in understanding the art form, but rather, it *is* the art form. From its roots in African dance, part of the essence of jazz dance is improvisation; spontaneous movement that is slightly competitive in nature, and done as a mode of individual expression.

Improvisation has been buried over time, especially since the codification of jazz techniques fused with ballet vocabulary and movement. At its core, jazz dance requires improvisation in order to participate fully in vernacular expression. Questions 14 and 15 of the master instructor interviews directly addressed improvisation and creativity in the classroom. Three master instructors emphasized the critical importance of including improvisation in jazz, especially since it is the core of jazz music. What speaks most about these instructors' expertise on the matter is that they all claimed that there lies an inherent structure within improvisatory activities, be it musical or movement vocabulary. I integrated this into my own class during warmups, in partners or as a large group exercise after a set warmup. All of the student participants wrote favorably about the improvisational warm ups and partner exercises. There was only one prompt that, based on student feedback, was unsuccessful. I will discuss this later in the chapter.

Improvisation isn't exclusive to jazz dance but, the rhythmic focus put on the improvisation in a jazz dance class makes it idiomatically tied to jazz dance as a formidable form of play. With a rhythmic focus, we express and converse through the body, but it keeps us within, even underscores, the context of jazz dance and its foundations, i.e., rhythm and rhythmic play. Because jazz dance improvisation is so often associated with rhythmic play, it helps students further understand the idiom itself – which I find is not

necessarily the case when performing or practicing other kinds of dance improvisation. Practicing play within a jazz dance class provides students an opportunity to not just express themselves, but to “play” with musical structure, connect with others involved in the improvisation and to directly participate in the vernacular expression that jazz dance is. In short, jazz dance improvisation is jazz dance, or a kind of encapsulated jazz experience. Eurocentric forms of dance use improvisation for exploratory purposes, but it does not define it in the same concentrated, performance way that improvisation defines jazz dance and music.

Elements: A Broader View

As stated before, this research has taught me that teaching jazz dance responsibly is less about teaching movement(s) and/or shape oriented vocabulary, but instead teaching jazz with the essential concepts that mold the art form: grounded-ness, rhythmic articulation and improvisation. It was inspiring and empowering to challenge the use of the word “technique” in a jazz dance context. I was initially conflicted with the understanding of technique at the beginning of this research but the master instructor interviews subsequently encouraged me to find other ways to deliver movement and conceptual elements to students without using the word, “technique.” There are many, different ways to teach a concept, especially through movement. Essentially, specific movements don’t matter, it is the *way* you do something that counts. For example, I don’t consider a kick or *battement* to be an important movement to include in every jazz class. But I do believe it’s important that if you do include it, the *way* you kick or *battement* becomes the important factor because it determines the idiomatic aesthetic. To generate a more mindful gathering

of responses regarding movement, it was appropriate and necessary to ask participants to reflect on their improvisation experiences.

The participants' journal entries reflect how crucial jazz dance improvisation is when it comes to allowing students to create their own jazz dance identities. As a vernacular art form, this underscores that improvisation is primary to an authentic jazz experience for the dancer; expressing individuality through raw movement and rhythmic play versus creating shapes in space. For me, improvisation carries the most weight in these results. It is interesting to note that "creativity" was not part of the participant responses to the week 6 question: What is the role of improvisation in this class? However, when asked about creative moments that were experienced, improvisation is at the top of the list. This demonstrates the importance of using improvisation as an additional creative tool, even if the students are unaware of its purpose.

As improvisation was absent in most of my dance training, this is the area where I need the most pedagogical attention and growth. And according to my findings, most of my students are also in need of more consistent improvisatory practice in the jazz dance class. More importantly, play and improvisation in the jazz dance class teaches students to become active listeners. Jazz dance improvisation requires us to connect on many levels; with each other and with our culture. Further, I agree with Sheron Wray (Guarino and Oliver 2014, 15) that improvisation in the jazz context is not a simple task or skill to develop; that is what makes it stand out from other art forms.

Improvisation stemming from an African tradition of call and response develops listening skills of the highest level. With roots in African dance, and jazz being part of the vernacular, I was surprised that only one master instructor emphasized call and response

in their jazz class. Call and Response appeared in many texts like *Stomping the Blues*, *Jazz Dance*, *Jazz Dance: a History of its Roots and Branches* and *Steppin' on the Blues*. But it was not specifically referenced in the interviews, with the exception of Ms. Hubbard. I hypothesize that due to the focus on history in all of the master instructor classes, that call and response probably does surface as an inherent part of the practice or at least, discussion. The active listening that takes place in a jazz dance class allows a student the ability to, not just individually express, but to literally have a non-verbal conversation on the dance floor that deeply connects people from within.

Historical Foundations and Teaching Jazz Dance

This avenue of research was by far, the most successful, to my students and even more significant to me as a teacher and practitioner. This avenue alone has transformed my understanding of teaching a jazz dance class in addition what it looks and feels like. History was referenced and included by all the master instructors during interviews and upon implementation in my own class, students were extremely responsive in their electronic and hand-written journals. Students connected their movements according to the timeline that we followed in class from the 1930s to pop jazz in the 1980s and 1990s.

Some of the most significant feedback from students regarding historical references during class compile the following:

- I would say that having a better understanding of jazz history has made me approach the movement in a more **curious** and **investigative** manner. It has also made me more aware of how important dialogue is for jazz dance, whether this means communicating with the music/musician, with your fellow dancers, or with yourself.
- My movement experience has changed in the sense that I recognize more **depth** in my movements and I understand more of the history behind what I am doing.

- I appreciated the fact that we would **stop to discuss specific musicians** and a brief synopsis of their **history** and plot before doing the movement. **This gave me a better understanding** of the steps and the choreographer's intentions, as well as showing me how it was influenced by earlier jazz dancers.
- Now returning to jazz that I am used to after weeks of learning the history of what came before it, I am very **appreciative of how this class has been structured. Making connections between past and present and recognizing movements that I'm used to with historical context gives me a whole different perspective on dance.**
- I think this class has been an excellent example of how **tracing the roots of jazz** dance can help us, as college students, develop a more complete picture of what jazz really is – specifically, that there is no right answer to this question, but rather **multiple ones.**
- I love **incorporating the historical jazz moves** in with what we are accustomed to.

I noticed that the participants wrote more about the historical topics than any other. As each participant admitted a lack of historical knowledge in prior training, this was the first time in a class setting for most participants to experience the history of jazz movement and culture. In Orange's journal, she referenced musical theatre encompassing early jazz movement revealed that this student now saw the connecting branches of the jazz dance tree, instead of seeing all of these styles as separate entities. This affirmation shows how historical context can change the way a dancer sees and experiences movement; answering one of my most pressing research questions: how historical inclusion changes the way a dancer experiences jazz dance.

Not only is this significant in and of itself, but more importantly, historical context allows the dancer to directly access the vernacular, even in a higher education setting. There is the Eurocentric model of why we make art that is entirely different in a vernacular mode. Similar to classical music, classical dance and the classical aesthetic focus on transcending the everyday whereas vernacular expression, like jazz dance, is a statement or conversation

between people commenting on subjects in real time, often with the intention of coping with or interpreting a present, honest experience or situation. The vernacular provides a path for us to negotiate a way through the struggles and joys of the here and now. Jazz dance at its core is vernacular; of the people. And when society is shaken, it will be brought into the practicing of jazz dance. As a humanitarian act at its core, jazz dance will always reflect the voice of the people.

I've come to realize that it is important to teach this vernacular understanding to students so that they may choose "how they like their art." This question was posed to me as a graduate student, and I feel that educators might benefit from asking this of all their students, so that we can act as mentors during a time when students are forming their dance identities. Through teaching jazz dance and other vernacular art forms honoring cultural impact, educators have the power to "offer students opportunities to develop their full identities in a manner that relates to their education" (McCarthy-Brown 2014, 127). No matter the training environment, if dance instructors provided historical knowledge in addition to teaching students how to execute movement or "technique," students might receive a balanced training, bringing deeper meaning to participation as practitioners.

History: A Broader View

This thesis experience allowed me to truly discover my identity as a jazz dancer and to grow as a teacher. This research guided me to the puzzle pieces that were missing for most of my life as a trained dancer. The turning point was the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference over the summer in Rhode Island. I finally found connections and *why* I loved the jazz dance idiom so much, in addition to meeting people (like the interviewees) who also loved jazz. Jazz dance can only be truly successful if it comes from the inside, and it

has taken me over 20 years to be able to articulate that. In my experience, without knowing the history of jazz dance, it seemed to operate through a vacuum – which I discovered in this research, is farthest from the truth. I often wonder if I were to have this kind of revelation at age 10 rather than 30, what might have transpired? This inquiry pushes me to bridge a gap in jazz dance education. I think it will take many more years and a lifetime of research to bridge that gap in the private sector (where most current jazz dance training occurs), but for now, higher education is a great place to start including the history of jazz dance. Based on the participant responses, it is clear that jazz dance history can deepen a dancer's training in specific ways. Why would we exclude the education that jazz dance can provide for students - especially with its origins rooted in our own soil? This is the power of jazz dance history! It allows students to experience the present in a more meaningful way.

Learning Opportunities – Future Course Alterations

While I did my best to create a course that would bring the most success to students' education, as in life, not everything was perfect. Instead of seeing these moments as failures, I prefer to see them as learning opportunities to consider while I plan my future jazz class(es). These learning opportunities consist of the “dialogue” improvisation exercise implemented during week six, structure of interview questions and Mr. Siegenfeld's techniques in relation to my course development.

The “dialogue” improvisation described in section 4.3 during week six was not perceived well by the students, based on their journals. The challenge seemed to lie in prompting them to improvise something very tangible, like, describing what you ate for breakfast. The students' movements were pantomimed rather than “danced” and their

reflections revealed frustration and discomfort with the exercise. I continue to believe that the message I initially set out to share is important; dialoguing in the jazz dance context, especially with the music. In the future, it might be helpful to include a musical prompt embedded within the “tangible” dialogue requested. Students also said that they felt pressured to be understood clearly, so describing something like food was difficult to express in an abstract form. I believe that a re-working of this assignment to highlight the more important message is necessary: how do we communicate, conversationally, in jazz dance through movement?

One of my interview questions delivered unexpected results; question eight: *In your experience, what kinds of music are most effective?* I realize now that this question is flawed and vague. What I was interested in uncovering was which musical selections were the best tools for learning, rather than which music measured effectiveness. This question could have used a probing, sub-question or reworded. I received detailed answers from the instructors, including names of artists/bands. But I really wanted to know which genre or musical time-period left the greatest impact on students and their education of jazz dance.

Mr. Siegenfeld’s Jump Rhythm Technique ® is admirable, and I was fortunate enough to experience it firsthand at the NDEO Jazz Dance Conference. I highly respect his scholarly contributions to the field, including his trademarked techniques, Jump Rhythm® and Standing Down Straight Method®. After reading and experiencing his movement technique(s), I decided that it was not appropriate for my research. A lot of his work involves vocalizations and movement requirements to assist in Standing Down Straight®. I believed that “scatting” would not be well received among the students because of unfamiliarity (and discomfort) with speaking and dancing at the same time. I understand

that it is a very advanced task. It is my impression that to get the most out of vocalizing or scatting in a jazz class, the utmost commitment must be made to that task. Unfortunately, I didn't feel that the students would take on vocalizations with complete focus. Instead, I went the opposite route during Week 6 when the students were asked to non-verbally dialogue as their warm up. Teaching active listening took priority over improvisatory vocalizations for this course, and these particular students.

I am also not qualified to teach Jump Rhythm Technique®, so I chose to use Mr. Siegenfeld's literature on the subject as supporting material for the development of the course. Moving forward, I would like to include vocalizations and scatting in my class, especially since it is part of the jazz music expressive palette. I believe that it would need to take the form of an addition to existing material, and/or present it in a game atmosphere, where students wouldn't focus solely on the idea of vocalizing – it would push them into doing it without hesitation.

Unexpected Findings

Among the learning opportunities that surfaced during the research, unexpected findings also emerged. These findings speak to the power of vernacular expression as a part of social discourse. Societal events permeated the classroom. One major event occurred during Week 7: the 2017 Presidential election in which Donald Trump became president-elect. This historic week affected students campus wide, and my particular students were no different. Despite any political affiliation students had, it was an emotionally charged week for all. This was something I could not ignore in class and I therefore invited students to use the space as a place for free expression and a sanctuary of acceptance and inclusion.

It was amazing to me how pertinent the election results were to the structure of my class, and to the artistic expression of my students. This was a defining moment. Although jazz dance has changed in form over time, the vernacular core and humanizing nature of jazz dance has not. History has proven that as society changes, so does jazz dance and artistic commentary. In this moment, I was reminded that the essence of jazz dance still lives on and will continue to represent people – not just a dance form in artistic amber. To me, this demonstrates the vernacular truth of jazz dance. Jazz dance doesn't just occur in the walls of a studio. It spans far outside any boundaries and filters into everyday life. For me personally, after I leave the studio I am still negotiating syncopation, accenting, riffing, and improvising in the life I live daily – with or without physically dancing. Jazz dance has an intense connection with life, speaking truth to its vernacular form.

Similarly, a segment on the history of Blackface emerged after the exposure of a UO Law Professor dressing in Blackface during a Halloween party in the same term. It was not my intention to discuss the logistics of the alleged claims made against the Law Professor, but I felt it necessary for the dance department to put some educational emphasis on the significance of the incident, at least from a vernacular theatrical and historical perspective. As the jazz instructor for the term, I felt even more of a responsibility to acknowledge and educate students on the history of Blackface, to help them understand why this incident was a major concern across campus. The segment consisted of readings and videos that took up an entire 50-minute class time, and it was one of the most valuable days we experienced as a class. Students were attentive with questions, opinions and commentary that I believe, aided in an even richer experience with jazz dance. Since this event took place, I find myself digging deeper into the history of Blackface, Minstrelsy and

Vaudeville because of the lack of reference it usually has in a jazz class, and the conversations of race in dance that it brings up. Since I have been transformed by historical foundations of jazz dance in my own practice, I will surely keep researching this topic.

Final Thoughts

During his interview, Danny Buraczeski said the following regarding jazz music:

The thing is with great Jazz, it's kind of timeless. You can go back to the same piece of music and say I never heard this before, this sounds different to me this time. So it has such great substance to it that I don't mind using it again. Then maybe in a couple of weeks or a couple of months I can go back to a piece of music and it still feels fresh and there are still things to learn from it.

Although Mr. Buraczeski was specifically referring to jazz music, I feel as though his statement speaks to the complex beauty of jazz dance as a whole. It is timeless, and you can always go back in jazz dance history and apply those concepts to today's practice. I have decided to dedicate the rest of my career to practicing, and advocating for, the increasing presence of jazz dance, and other vernacular art forms in higher education curricula. Through this research, I have found that jazz dance contributes to a dancers' holistic education providing access to the vital contribution that vernacular expression brings. Higher education and vernacular art forms typically exist in two separate worlds, but jazz dance can bridge them and provide students a unique education.

I could list many reasons why jazz dance might play a part in "well-rounded" training, however, the three main avenues explored in this research stand out as unique qualities of jazz dance. These qualities are a part of other dance idioms like modern and ballet, but not as uniquely central figures as in jazz dance. These three avenues help create the beating heart of jazz dance and more importantly, once learned, can enhance a dancer's

training within any style. This is how I found success and identity as a jazz dancer in a modern dance program, and with jazz dance *equally* included and given equal emphasis in a college program curriculum, I believe that we can maximize our students' dance education. Responsibly teaching jazz dance is a complex task, but teaching jazz dance in the light of the humanities will always make it a justifiable and vital art form. Teaching students how to do jazz dance movement is one way of educating, but teaching the essence of jazz dance aligns with an affirmation made by Professor Darwin Prioleau: "Jazz is not just a shirt that you put over your body – it comes from within."

NOTES

ⁱInstructors on faculty during this time were choreographers like Barry Lather, Terry Lindholm and Frank Hatchett.

ⁱⁱMy understanding of lyrical dance is a balanced mix of jazz and ballet dance. Movement is fueled by the music, particularly the lyrics. I was not exposed to modern dance until the age of 18 when I began studying as a dance minor at the University of Central Florida.

ⁱⁱⁱ The term “the Other” references non-Western forms of Dance.

^{iv}The “jazz attitude” is coined by black dance historian Joe Nash. He defines the “jazz attitude” as an internal attitude that reflects jazz dancing, which cannot be taught. An individual must inherit this type of attitude to understand jazz dance. (Hubbard 2008, 112)

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Technique: As my studies continue, I am beginning to understand that the term “technique” in the jazz dance context can have many definitions; or quite frankly, can be misunderstood in many contexts. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I will be replacing the term *technique* with *elements*. More importantly in this study, I will be addressing two profound layers of elements in the context of a jazz class that I believe have direct correlation with technique and its meanings: movement elements and conceptual elements. The list of layers that make up “technique” could go on and on. To an extent it is subjective, but other important layers could encompass the avenues to which I am actually separating: musical choice and historical foundations. In short, those could be considered layers of technique to certain instructors. Others might only equate “technique” to movement. However, I believe the term is too broad to be used in this study. I am interested in understanding the movement elements that are important (for example, a jazz lock) and also conceptual elements that are crucial (for example, the “cool” aesthetic defined by Robert Farris Thompson). It is my hope that this focused analysis on these specific layers can contribute to better defining what is a problematic term - “technique.”

Vernacular Dance: In Guarino and Oliver’s new edited compendium: *Jazz Dance: A History of its Roots and Branches*, vernacular dance is described as “any social dance styles that reflect a time, culture and community” (Guarino and Oliver 2014, 29). This definition is suitable here because it is closely aligned with my research regarding how to teach jazz and other vernacular forms like hip hop. The goal is not only to introduce the dance alone, but also the culture of the idiom and its interpretive position among the individuals who created it.

Jazz Dance: A useful definition of “jazz dance” is posited by Marshall and Jean Stearns; “a blend of European and African traditions in an American environment” (Stearns and Stearns 1968, xvi). I feel that Guarino and Oliver’s vernacular definition sets up a structure, and the Stearns’ definition fills in a useful social aspect for readers reviewing my research process.

Improvisation/Play: For the context of my research, I am using Sheron Wray’s writing on understanding the meaning behind play. She states, “In most instances, the word play suggests something trivial and child-centered: however, in this context it relates to complexity” (Wray 2014, 15). This complexity revolves around the rhythmic articulation that is explored during improvisation and play in the jazz dance class.

Rhythmic-Dynamism: Jacqui Malone quotes Léopold Senghor’s interpretation of rhythm; a poetic description that identifies rhythm as the “root of our being” (Malone 2003, 231). She also explains that dynamism is an essential element found in black performance due to the “demands of the audience for dynamic invention and virtuosity” (Malone 2003, 233). Malone separates these two elements but in my experience as a jazz dance performer, as

well as in teaching, I think it makes more sense for the two elements to be combined as one concept for this paper; rhythmic dynamism.

Modern dance: When using the term, “modern dance,” I am referring to the art form that encompasses specific codified and uncoded techniques (Graham, Limón, Horton, Cunningham, “Release,” Klein etc.) in addition to somatic, creative or explorative movement that would classify as “contemporary” or “body work.”

Ballet: When I reference ballet, I am referring to the classical dance form that is taught as various forms: Vaganova, Cecchetti or Balanchine™ technique.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Week 1: 9/27/16

First Day of classes for Fall Term 2016 at the University of Oregon

8 students were registered for my class at this time.

- Verbally review history of jazz starting as an American art form, beginning with the slave trade.
- Ask students if they've ever taken African dance
- Review comparable African aesthetics:
 - Community
 - Circle
 - Earth
 - Body pitched forward

Improvisational Warm up: *Do this with them*

- “Something’s Got a Hold on Me” by Etta James
- Ask students to consider:
 - Eye contact while walking
 - Stylized walks
- Add to the walking points of initiation (open for student interpretation):
 - Shoulder
 - Elbow
 - Hips
 - Knees
 - Feet

Center Movements:

- Boogie Woogie: Front and Back
- Pickin’ Cherries
 - “Ain’t Too Proud to Beg” Temptations
 - Start with the baseline tempo
 - Change the rhythm twice
- Freestyle Pickin cherries:
 - Give students 4 counts of 8 ct phrase to freestyle a rhythm while pickin cherries
- Conclude with follow-the-leader (me) group stretch

Lindy Hop

- “Keepin Out of Mischief Now” Louis Armstrong
- “All That Meat and No Potatoes” Fats Waller
- “Circle of Your Arms” Louis Armstrong
- Demonstrate “Lindy Step” and ask students if it looks familiar
- Basic step
 - He goes/She goes
 - Swing out

Conclusion of class:

- Remind students that they are dancing “early jazz”

Week 1: 9/29/16

Warm Up: Improvisation

- “Watermelon Man” by Herbie Hancock
- Stylized walks in circular patterns
- Melanie George Reaches:
 - A practice of sforzando movement – accenting the arms on a certain count, and then melting them down until the next accent is executed. This is done with reaching of the arms in space. Usually the accented count is on 8 or 1, and increases as the exercise goes on....to add on 4, and 2. Do with odd numbers as well.

Flying and Falling

- “I Feel So Smoochie” Lena Horne
- This exercise was introduced to me by Myles Throroughgood and its intention is to navigate balance, weight transfer, inversion and finding your internal swing.

Across the Floor:

- “Straighten up and fly right” Nat King Cole Trio
- Pickin Cherries for 4, Boogie Back for 4
 - Focus on syncopation of the “8” clap
- Shorty George
 - “Are You Hep to the Jive (Yas Yas)” Cab Calloway and Orchestra
 - Emphasize and clarify the hip movement

Large Combination: Shim Sham

- “Tain’t What Ya Do (It’s the Way That You Do It)” Jimmie Lunceford

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What about teaching a jazz class interests you? Why do you do it?
2. What are your values and goals in the classroom?
3. How do you achieve these?

MUSIC

4. What role does music play in your class?
5. What type of music do you use in your class?
6. How do you teach the music of your movement?
7. What are key musical concepts?
8. In your experience, kinds of music in class are most effective?

TECHNIQUE/MOVEMENT

9. How do you define “technique”?
10. What core movements are found in a class?
11. What core movement concepts are part of a class? Do you separate movement from concept? Why or why not?
12. What is the function of warm up?
13. Do you use across the floor patterns? If yes, how do you conduct them?
14. What role does improvisation play in your class?

15. How are your students encouraged to be creative in class?

16. Do you integrate other styles of dance in your jazz class?

HISTORY

17. How do you approach jazz dance history?

18. How does this historical knowledge affects class experience for a student? Any examples?

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

19. What is the current state of jazz dance in the academy? How do you feel about that?

20. How do you envision academic jazz classes in 10 years??

APPENDIX D

NDEO JAZZ DANCE CONFERENCE

Monday, August 1, 2016:

9:00am-10:00am	Authentic Jazz	Karen Hubbard	Vernacular dance of the 1920s to the early 1940s, when dance and music were inseparable entities; reflects society and culture in this time period.
10:15am-11:15am	Rhythm Generated Jazz	Billy Siegenfeld	Jump Rhythm® Technique – dance that reflects the complex rhythmic characteristics of jazz music.
11:30am-12:30pm	Vernacular Jazz	Moncell Durden	Vernacular dance today: Hip Hop as a form of communication.
Lunch			
2:30pm-3:45pm	Jazz Roots in Practice	Thom Cobb(Moderator), Moncell Durden Karen Hubbard, Billy Siegenfeld	Panel Discussion
4:00pm-4:45pm	It Don't Mean a Thing if it Ain't got that Musicality: A Music First Approach	Erinn Liebhard	Paper Presentation
5:00pm-5:45pm	Latin Jazz Fusion: Engaging Students with the Passion of Ballroom Dance	Amy VanKirk	Movement Session

Tuesday, August 2, 2016:

8:45am-9:45am	Signature Movement Session	Danny Buraczeski	Rhythm based jazz, inspired by the vernacular.
10:00am-11:00am	Signature Movement Session	Melanie George	Connection of jazz music and dance to popular contemporary culture.
11:15am-12:15p	Signature Movement Session	Bob Boross	Matt Mattox' Freestyle Jazz Dance
12:30pm-1:30pm	Signature Movement Session	Darwin Prioleau	Jazz dance for the concert stage influenced by West African movement.
Lunch – Interviewed Cathy Young			

2:30pm- 3:45pm	Jazz Branches in Practice	Thom Cobb(Moderator), Danny Buraczeski, Melanie George, Bob Boross, Darwin Prioleau	Panel Discussion
4:00pm- 4:45pm	Jazz Dance in Higher Education: A New Model	Cathy Young	Lecture

Wednesday, August 3, 2016:

8:45am- 9:45am	Synchronicity of Roots and Branches	Sheron Wray	In this culminating session, we will be recognizing aspects of authentic, vernacular, theatrical, and concert jazz. In other words, this is the continuum of jazz dance as it has evolved thus far.
10:15am- 11:15am	Next Steps	Thom Cobb, facilitator	Brainstorming for future conferences to keep the discussion alive. Consolidate and summarize issues brought up during the Pulse of Jazz group discussion.

APPENDIX E

STUDENT ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you describe jazz dance to someone who has never taken a jazz class?
2. What role does music play in this class?
3. What type of music or particular song has been your favorite so far? Why?
4. What is “technique”?
5. According to your knowledge and training, name three of the most important movements in jazz dance. In your opinion, why are they the most important?
6. How would you describe the of improvisation in this class?
7. Before this class, has jazz dance history ever been discussed in your dance training? If so, when and how?
8. When do you feel most creative in this class?
9. With an understanding of jazz dance history, has your movement experience changed? Why or why not?
10. How would you describe jazz dance to someone who has never taken a jazz class?

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF PERSONAL RESEARCH NOTES

Tuesday 10/18/16 – 1950s Jazz Continued

Began class explaining that during this time period Jazz music became un-danceable. Bebop was formed by artists like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Therefore, the growth of the Musical Theatre branch of the tree extended and truly took form. Had students listen to “Salt Peanuts” by Parker and Gillespie, just to understand how complicated the music was becoming during that time.

Warm Up floor combination: “Willow Weep for Me” by The Modern Jazz Quartet

- Series of spirals on the floor, yoga poses and stretches including an improv section
- Improv:
 - Level changes, their own movement with the intention of warming up moving from low level, medium level to high level standing.
 - Articulation of the feet: inside, outside, top of the foot, heel, ankle, big toe

***Students seemed unresponsive and mediocly engaged during these exercises.

Plies: “Joy Spring” – Clifford Brown and Max Roach

- Brisk pace pliés done with the intention of buoyancy.

***It was really nice to see the students let go of the ballet form slightly. I feel that they may or may not have intentionally done this as to keep up with the pace of the music choice.

Flying and Falling: “Mambo Inn” – Tito Puente

***This was a nice transition to sneak in Jazz music education. Explanation of the Palladium era and how it resembled the same results of the Savoy theatre – slumming. Tito Puente among other Latin artists influenced the beginnings of Latin Jazz genre.

- Students asked great articulating questions before the exercise began. Rotation of the leg, side movement head placement.
- Reviewed Hinges – students seemed to either crunch their hinges or fall out of them too easily. Explained the linear/angular look to a hinge and that even though it appears to be a fall out, it’s quite controlled.

***Students progressed in their hinges during the exercise. Looked more grounded – like they were using the floor to create shape. This also allowed me to insert how in history, this is the time period when Giordano and Luigi would start to create their techniques....holding a lot of the linear/angular aesthetic as a main idea in their techniques. And ballet vocab.

Across the Floor: “Moanin’” - Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers

- Drags
 - Drag x2, second one ripples into a grapevine, step right on 6, pivot pushing the right foot, 7,8.

- ***We had to do this combination twice. Students struggled BIG TIME with the syncopation of the combination. The first pass across the floor, it appeared to me that the students were still bodily searching for a 4/4 pulse, and it prevented them from hearing and embodying any kind of syncopation. Before the second side, I repeated the counts with elaborated vocalizations that paralleled how their bodies should be reacting and performing the movement according to the chosen syncopation. The second time was better, but it still needed work from every student as far as appearing to be comfortable.
- Scootches:
 - Kick ball change x2 (1&2, 3&4), scootch (&5), back pas de bourré turn (even 6, 7,8)
 - Broke down the aesthetic of a scootch.
 - ***Students still struggled with the timing.
 - ***Asked my students “why is this challenging?” I also asked them to think about their past jazz training in comparison to the present class and how the challenges are so different.
 - Student response: “We were just learning tricks”
 - I replied: “The absence of tap in an individual’s training may also make these exercises more difficult. This question isn’t trying to make you feel bad about your training and who you are as a jazz dancer, but simply to open your eyes to the breadth of jazz. And to observe where you’ve come from to where you are now.”

Listened to Dave Brubeck’s “Take 5” and asked the students to clap on certain counts. Hopefully to help them understand that Jazz Music can have funky meters outside of a 4-count bar. ***Students didn’t seem to have many issues with this, but it took full concentration from them. No one was able to look around, they were fully invested in their ears hearing the music and the rhythm.

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